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WESTWARD HO!

BY
Charles Kingsley

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INTRODUCTION

IN October 1854, when all England was aglow with pride at the heroism of her troops in the Crimea, Charles Kingsley wrote to his friend Frederic Denison Maurice: "This war would have made me half mad if I had let it. It seemed so dreadful to hear of those Alma heights being taken and not to be there; but God knows best, and I suppose I am not fit for such brave work. . . . But I can fight with my pen still . . . not in controversy, but in writing books which will make others fight. This one is to be called *Westward Ho!* . . . The writing of it has done me much good. I have been living in those Elizabethan books, among such grand, beautiful, silent men."

The book appeared in January 1855, and made a powerful impression. The circumstances of the time rendered its appearance opportune, and people read eagerly of the adventurous doings of heroes of old. As the above quotation shows, it was Kingsley's deliberate intention to stir up a healthy patriotic spirit. In a letter to the author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, he says: "It is a sanguinary book, but perhaps containing doctrine profitable for these times." Kingsley never had any sympathy with the idea of peace at any price. He believed that fighting was sometimes necessary, and taught his fellow-countrymen that, with a good cause, a fighter was doing God's will.

Westward Ho! was written at Bideford, the little Devonshire port at which the story opens. Kingsley always delighted in the open air, and his descriptions of the breezy life in town and country in Elizabethan days are full of vigour and enthusiasm. His intense love of nature also finds expression in many descriptive passages which prove him to have been a close observer; the carefulness of the man of science, however, being mingled with the artist's love of the beautiful.

Introduction

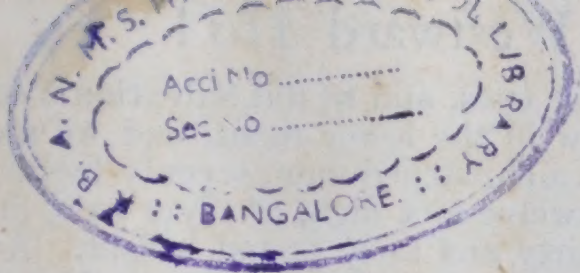
Charles Kingsley, the son of a clergyman, was born in Devonshire in 1819. He was an active boy, learning when very young to ride, boat, and swim, and walking many miles in search of plants and shells. At the age of nineteen he went up to Cambridge, where he worked harder at his hobbies than at the recognized studies. On leaving college he became a clergyman, and was ordained to the curacy of Eversley in Hampshire, where he remained as curate and rector for nearly thirty years. In 1869 he was appointed canon of Chester, in 1873 canon of Westminster, and he died on January 23, 1875.

Kingsley was a hard-working parish clergyman, but he had a great variety of interests—history, science, art, literature, sport. It was his fondness for athletics and sport that led a journalist to describe him as an apostle of "muscular Christianity." As might be expected, he was very popular with young men, over whom he exercised a great influence; but his geniality made him a favourite with every one. At his funeral soldiers, statesmen, villagers, men of science, met cricketers and huntsmen, these last having brought up horses and hounds to honour the memory of one who had written so finely of the joys of hunting.

Besides his novels, of which *Westward Ho!*, *Hypatia*, *Alton Locke*, and *Hereward the Wake* are the chief, Kingsley wrote books of science and travel, historical essays, *The Heroes*, a book of Greek fairy tales, *The Water Babies*, a fairy tale for children, and several volumes of poetry. Perhaps he will be remembered longest for his exquisite little songs such as "The Sands of Dee" and "The Three Fishers."

HERBERT STRANG.





WESTWARD HO!

CHAPTER I

ALL who have travelled through the delicious scenery of North Devon must needs know the little white town of Bideford, which slopes upwards from its broad tide-river paved with yellow sands, and many-arched old bridge where salmon wait for autumn floods, toward the pleasant upland on the west. Above the town the hills close in, cushioned with deep oak woods, through which juts here and there a crag of fern-fringed slate; below they lower, and open more and more in softly rounded knolls, and fertile squares of red and green, till they sink into the wide expanse of hazy flats, rich salt-marshes, and rolling sandhills, where Torridge joins her sister Taw, and both together flow quietly toward the broad surges of the bar, and the everlasting thunder of the long Atlantic swell.

One bright summer's afternoon, in the year of grace 1575, a tall and fair boy came lingering along Bideford quay, in his scholar's gown, with satchel and slate in hand, watching wistfully the shipping and the sailors, till, just after he had passed the bottom of the High Street, he came opposite to one of the many taverns which looked out upon the river. In the open bay-window sat merchants and gentlemen, discoursing over their afternoon's draught of sack; and outside the door was gathered a group of sailors, listening earnestly to some one who stood in the midst. The boy, all alive for any sea-news, must needs go up to them, and take his place among the sailor-lads who were peeping and whispering under the elbows of the men; and so came in for the following speech, delivered in a loud bold voice, with a strong Devonshire accent, and a fair sprinkling of oaths.

"If you don't believe me, go and see, or stay here and grow all over blue mould. I tell you, as I am a gentleman,

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I saw it with these eyes, and so did Salvation Yeo there, through a window in the lower room; and we measured the heap, as I am a christened man, seventy foot long, ten foot broad, and twelve foot high, of silver bars, and each bar between a thirty and forty pound weight. And says Captain Drake : ' There, my lads of Devon, I've brought you to the mouth of the world's treasure-house, and it's your own fault now if you don't sweep it out as empty as a stock-fish.' "

" Why didn't you bring some of they home, then, Mr. Oxenham ? "

" Why weren't you there to help to carry them ? We would have brought 'em away, safe enough, and young Drake and I had broke the door aboard already, but Captain Drake goes off in a dead faint; and when we came to look, he had a wound in his leg you might have laid three fingers in, and his boots were full of blood, and had been for an hour or more; but the heart of him was that, that he never knew it till he dropped, and then his brother and I got him away to the boats, he kicking and struggling, and bidding us let him go on with the fight, though every step he took in the sand was in a pool of blood; and so we got off."

He who delivered this harangue was a tall and sturdy personage, with a florid, black-bearded face, and bold, restless dark eyes, who leaned, with crossed legs and arms akimbo, against the wall of the house; and seemed in the eyes of the schoolboy a very magnifico, some prince or duke at least. He was dressed (contrary to all sumptuary laws of the time) in a suit of crimson velvet, a little the worse, perhaps, for wear; by his side were a long Spanish rapier and a brace of daggers, gaudy enough about the hilts; his fingers sparkled with rings; he had two or three gold chains about his neck, and large earrings in his ears, behind one of which a red rose was stuck jauntily enough among the glossy black curls; on his head was a broad velvet Spanish hat, in which instead of a feather was fastened with a great gold clasp a whole Quezal bird, whose gorgeous plumage of fretted golden green shone like one entire precious stone. As he finished his speech, he took off the said hat, and looking at the bird in it—

" Look ye, my lads, did you ever see such a fowl as that before ? That's the bird which the old Indian kings of

Mexico let no one wear but their own selves; and therefore I wear it,—I, John Oxenham of South Tawton,—for a sign to all brave lads of Devon, that as the Spaniards are the masters of the Indians, we're the masters of the Spaniards": and he replaced his hat.

A murmur of applause followed: but one hinted that he "doubted the Spaniards were too many for them."

"Too many? How many men did we take Nombre de Dios with? Seventy-three were we, and no more when we sailed out of Plymouth Sound; and before we saw the Spanish Main, half were 'gastados,' used up, as the Dons say, with the scurvy; and in Port Pheasant Captain Rawse of Cowes fell in with us, and that gave us some thirty hands more; and with that handful, my lads, only fifty-three in all, we picked the lock of the new world!"

"You're right, Captain," sang out a tall, gaunt fellow who stood close to him; "one west-countryman can fight two easterlings, and an easterling can beat three Dons any day. Eh! my lads of Devon?"

"For O! it's the herrings and the good brown beef,
And the cider and the cream so white;
O! they are the making of the jolly Devon lads,
For to play, and eke to fight."

"Come," said Oxenham, "come along! Who lists? who lists? who'll make his fortune?"

"Oh, who will join, jolly mariners all?
And who will join, says he, O!
To fill his pockets with the good red goold,
By sailing on the sea, O!"

"Who'll list?" cried the gaunt man again; "now's your time! We've got forty men to Plymouth now, ready to sail the minute we get back, and we want a dozen out of you Bideford men, and just a boy or two, and then we're off and away, and make our fortunes, or go to heaven."

"Now," said Oxenham, "you won't let the Plymouth men say that the Bideford men daren't follow them North Devon against South, it is who'll join, who'll join. It is but a step of a way, after all, and sailing as smooth as a duck-pond as soon as you're past Cape Finisterre. I'll run a Clovelly herring-boat there and back for a wager of twenty pound, and never ship a bucketful all the way. Who'll join? Don't think you're buying a pig in a poke."

I know the road, and Salvation Yeo, here, too, who was the gunner's mate, as well as I do the narrow seas, and better. You ask him to show you the chart of it, now, and see if he don't tell you over the ruttier as well as Drake himself."

On which the gaunt man pulled from under his arm a great white buffalo-horn covered with rough etchings of land and sea, and held it up to the admiring ring.

"See here, boys all, and behold the pictur of the place. Take mun in your hands now, Simon Evans, take mun in your hands; look mun over, and I'll warrant you'll know the way in five minutes so well as ever a shark in the seas."

The schoolboy, who had been devouring with eyes and ears all which passed, and had contrived by this time to edge himself into the inner ring, now stood face to face with the hero of the emerald crest, and got as many peeps as he could at the wonder. But when he saw the sailors, one after another, having turned it over a while, come forward and offer to join Mr. Oxenham, his soul burned within him for a nearer view of that wondrous horn; and when the group had somewhat broken up, and Oxenham was going into the tavern with his recruits, he asked boldly for a nearer sight of the marvel, which was granted at once.

And now to his astonished gaze displayed themselves cities and harbours, dragons and elephants, whales which fought with sharks, plate ships of Spain, islands with apes and palm-trees, each with its name over-written, and here and there, "Here is gold"; and again, "Much gold and silver"; inserted most probably, as the words were in English, by the hands of Mr. Oxenham himself. Lingeringly and longingly the boy turned it round and round, and thought the owner of it more fortunate than Khan or Kaiser. Oh, if he could but possess that horn, what needed he on earth beside to make him blest!

"I say, will you sell this?"

"Yea, marry, or my own soul, if I can get the worth of it."

"I want the horn,—I don't want your soul; it's somewhat of a stale sole, for aught I know; and there are plenty of fresh ones in the bay."

And therewith, after much fumbling, he pulled out a sixpence (the only one he had), and asked if that would buy it.

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"That ! no, nor twenty of them."

The boy thought over what a good knight-errant would do in such case, and then answered, "Tell you what: I'll fight you for it."

"Thank'ee, sir !"

"Break the jackanapes's head for him, Yeo," said Oxenham.

"Call me jackanapes again, and I break yours, sir." And the boy lifted his fist fiercely.

Oxenham looked at him a minute smilingly. "Tut ! tut ! my man, hit one of your own size, if you will, and spare little folk like me !"

"If I have a boy's age, sir, I have a man's fist. I shall be fifteen years old this month, and know how to answer any one who insults me."

"Fifteen, my young cockerel ? you look liker twenty," said Oxenham, with an admiring glance at the lad's broad limbs, keen blue eyes, curling golden locks, and round honest face. "Fifteen ? If I had half a dozen such lads as you, I would make knights of them before I died. Eh, Yeo ?"

"He'll do," said Yeo; "he will make a brave gamecock in a year or two, if he dares ruffle up so early at a tough old hen-master like the Captain."

At which there was a general laugh, in which Oxenham joined as loudly as any, and then bade the lad tell him why he was so keen after the horn.

"Because," said he, looking up boldly, "I want to go to sea. I want to see the Indies. I want to fight the Spaniards. Though I am a gentleman's son, I'd a deal liefer be a cabin-boy on board your ship."

"And you shall," cried Oxenham, with a great oath. "Whose son are you, my gallant fellow ?"

"Mr. Leigh's, of Burrough Court."

"Bless his soul ! I know him as well as I do the Eddy-stone, and his kitchen too. Who sups with him to-night ?"

"Sir Richard Grenvile."

"Djck Grenvile ? I did not know he was in town. Go home and tell your father John Oxenham will come and keep him company. There, off with you ! I'll make all straight with the good gentleman, and you shall have your venture with me; and as for the horn, let him have the horn, Yeo, and I'll give you a noble for it."

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“Not a penny, noble Captain. If young master will take a poor mariner’s gift, there it is, for the sake of his love to the calling, and Heaven send him luck therein.” And the good fellow, with the impulsive generosity of a true sailor, thrust the horn into the boy’s hands, and walked away to escape thanks.

Now this young gentleman, Amyas Leigh, being (on account of the valour, courtesy, and truly noble qualities which he showed forth in his most eventful life) chosen by me as the hero and centre of this story, was not, saving for his good looks, by any means what would be called nowadays an “interesting” youth, still less a “highly educated” one; for, with the exception of a little Latin, which had been driven into him by repeated blows, as if it had been a nail, he knew no books whatsoever, save his Bible, his Prayer-book, the old *Mort d’Arthur*, and the translation of Las Casas’s *History of the West Indies*, lately done into English under the title of *The Cruelties of the Spaniards*. Nevertheless, this ignorant young savage had learnt certain things which he would hardly have been taught just now in any school in England; for his training had been that of the old Persians, “to speak the truth and to draw the bow,” both of which savage virtues he had acquired to perfection, as well as the equally savage ones of enduring pain cheerfully, and of believing it to be the finest thing in the world to be a gentleman; by which word he had been taught to understand the careful habit of causing needless pain to no human being, poor or rich, and of taking pride in giving up his own pleasure for the sake of those who were weaker than himself. Lastly, he had been for some time past, on account of his extraordinary size and strength, undisputed cock of the school, and the most terrible fighter among all Bideford boys; in which brutal habit he took much delight, and contrived, strange as it may seem, to extract from it good, not only for himself but for others, doing justice among his school-fellows with a heavy hand, and succouring the oppressed and afflicted; so that he was the terror of all the sailor-lads, and the pride and stay of all the town’s boys and girls, and hardly considered that he had done his duty in his calling if he went home without beating a big lad for bullying a little one.

Mr. Oxenham came that evening to supper as he had promised: but as people supped in those days in much the

same manner as they do now, we may drop the thread of the story for a few hours, and take it up again after supper is over.

"Come now, Dick Grenville, do thou talk the good man round, and I'll warrant myself to talk round the good wife."

The personage whom Oxenham addressed thus familiarly answered by a somewhat sarcastic smile, and, "Mr. Oxenham gives Dick Grenville" (with just enough emphasis on the "Mr." and the "Dick," to hint that a liberty had been taken with him) "overmuch credit with the men. Mr. Oxenham's credit with fair ladies, none can doubt. Friend Leigh, is Heard's great ship home yet from the Straits?"

Oxenham felt somewhat puzzled and nettled, when, after having asked Mr. Leigh's leave to take young Amyas with him, and set forth in glowing colours the purpose of his voyage, he found Sir Richard utterly unwilling to help him with his suit.

"You have asked his father and mother," said Sir Richard. "What is their answer?"

"Mine is this," said Mr. Leigh; "if it be God's will that my boy should become, hereafter, such a mariner as Sir Richard Grenville, let him go, and God be with him; but let him first bide here at home and be trained, if God give me grace, to become such a gentleman as Sir Richard Grenville."

Sir Richard bowed low, and Mrs. Leigh catching up the last word—

"There, Mr. Oxenham, you cannot gainsay that, unless you will be discourteous to his worship. And for me—though it be a weak woman's reason, yet it is a mother's: he is my only child. His elder brother is far away. God only knows whether I shall see him again; and what are all reports of his virtues and his learning to me, compared to that sweet presence which I daily miss! Ah! Mr. Oxenham, you have no child, or you would not ask for mine!"

"And how do you know that, my sweet Madam?" said the adventurer, turning first deadly pale, and then glowing red. Her last words had touched him to the quick in some unexpected place; and rising, he courteously laid her hand to his lips, and said—"I say no more. Fare-

well, sweet Madam, and God send all men such wives as you."

"And all wives," said she, smiling, "such husbands as mine."

"Nay, I will not say that," answered he, with a half sneer—and then, "Farewell, friend Leigh—farewell, gallant Dick Grenvile. God send I see thee Lord High Admiral when I come home. And yet, why should I come home? Will you pray for poor Jack, gentles?"

"Tut, tut, man! good words," said Leigh; "let us drink to our merry meeting before you go." And rising, and putting the tankard of malmsey to his lips, he passed it to Sir Richard, who rose, and saying, "To the fortune of a bold mariner and a gallant gentleman," drank, and put the cup into Oxenham's hand.

The adventurer's face was flushed, and his eye wild. Whether from the liquor he had drunk during the day, or whether from Mrs. Leigh's last speech, he had not been himself for a few minutes. He lifted the cup, and was in act to pledge them, when he suddenly dropped it on the table, and pointed, staring and trembling, up and down and round the room, as if following some fluttering object.

"There! Do you see it? The bird!—the bird with the white breast!"

Each looked at the other; but Leigh who was a quick-witted man, and an old courtier, forced a laugh instantly, and cried—

"Nonsense, brave Jack Oxenham! Leave white birds for men who will show the white feather. Mrs. Leigh waits to pledge you."

Oxenham recovered himself in a moment, pledged them all round, drinking deep and fiercely; and after hearty farewells, departed, never hinting again at his strange exclamation.

After he was gone, and while Leigh was attending him to the door, Mrs. Leigh and Grenvile kept a few minutes' dead silence. At last—

"God help him!" said she.

"Amen!" said Grenvile, "for he never needed it more. But, indeed, Madam, I put no faith in such omens."

"But, Sir Richard, that bird has been seen for generations before the death of any of his family. I know those who were at South Tawton when his mother died, and his

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brother also; and they both saw it. God help him! for, after all, he is a proper man."

"So many a lady has thought before now, Mrs. Leigh. But, indeed, I make no account of omens. When God is ready for each man, then he must go; and when can he go better? And now come hither to me, my adventurous godson, and don't look in such doleful dumps. I hear you have broken all the sailor-boys' heads already."

"Nearly all," said young Amyas, with due modesty. "But am I not to go to sea?"

"All things in their time, my boy, and God forbid that either I or your worthy parents should keep you from that noble calling which is the safeguard of this England and her queen. But you do not wish to live and die the master of a trawler?"

"I should like to be a brave adventurer like Mr. Oxenham."

"God grant you become a braver man than he! for, as I think, to be bold against the enemy is common to the brutes; but the prerogative of a man is to be bold against himself."

"How, sir?"

"To conquer our own fancies, Amyas, and our ambition, in the sacred name of duty; this it is to be truly brave and truly strong, for he who cannot rule himself, how can he rule his crew or his fortunes? Come, now, I will make you a promise. If you will hide quietly at home, and learn from your father and mother all which befits a gentleman and a Christian, as well as a seaman, the day shall come when you shall sail with Richard Grenville himself, or with better men than he, on a nobler errand than gold-hunting on the Spanish Main."

And so Amyas Leigh went back to school, and Mr. Oxenham went his way to Plymouth again, and sailed for the Spanish Main.

CHAPTER II

FIVE years are past and gone. It is nine of the clock on a still, bright November morning; but the bells of Bideford church are still ringing for the daily service two hours after the usual time; and instead of going soberly according to wont, cannot help breaking forth every five minutes into a jocund peal, and tumbling head over heels in ecstasies of joy. Bideford streets are a very flower-garden of all the colours, swarming with seamen and burghers, and burghers' wives and daughters, all in their holiday attire. The ships in the pool are dressed in all their flags, and give tumultuous vent to their feelings by peals of ordnance of every size. Every stable is crammed with horses; and Sir Richard Grenville's house is like a very tavern with eating and drinking, and unsaddling, and running to and fro of grooms and serving-men. Along the little churchyard, packed full with women, streams all the gentle blood of North Devon,—tall and stately men, and fair ladies, worthy of the days when the gentry of England were by due right the leaders of the people, by personal prowess and beauty, as well as by intellect and education.

And what is it which has thus sent old Bideford wild with that "goodly joy and pious mirth," of which we now only retain traditions in our translation of the Psalms? Why are all eyes in the church fixed, with greedy admiration, on those four weather-beaten mariners, decked out with knots and ribbons by loving hands; and yet more on that gigantic figure who walks before them, a beardless boy, and yet with the frame and stature of a Hercules, towering, like Saul of old, a head and shoulders above all the congregation, with his golden locks flowing down over his shoulders? And why, as the five go instinctively up to the altar, and there fall on their knees before the rails, are all eyes turned to the pew where Mrs. Leigh of Burrough has hid her face between her hands, and her hood rustles and shakes to her joyful sobs? Because there was fellow-feeling of old in merry England, in county and in town; and these are Devon men, and men of Bideford,

whose names are Amyas Leigh of Burrough, John Staveley, Michael Heard, and Jonas Marshall of Bideford, and Thomas Braund of Clovelly: and they, the first of all English mariners, have sailed round the world with Francis Drake, and are come hither to give God thanks.

It is a long story. To explain how it happened we must go back for a page or two, almost to the point from whence we started in the last chapter. For somewhat more than a twelvemonth after Mr. Oxenham's departure, young Amyas had gone on quietly enough, according to promise, with the exception of certain occasional outbursts of fierceness common to all young male animals, and especially to boys of any strength of character. His scholarship, indeed, progressed no better than before; but his home education went on healthily enough; and he was fast becoming, young as he was, a right good archer, and rider, and swordsman (after the old school of buckler practice), when his father, having gone down on business to the Exeter Assizes, caught (as was too common in those days) the gaol-fever from the prisoners; sickened in the very court; and died within a week.

And now, at a little past forty, Mrs. Leigh was left a widow: lovely still in face, and figure; and still more lovely from the divine calm which brooded, like the dove of peace and the Holy Spirit of God (which indeed it was), over every look, and word, and gesture; a sweetness which had been ripened by storm, as well as by sunshine; which this world had not given, and could not take away. No wonder that Sir Richard and Lady Grenville loved her; no wonder that her children worshipped her; no wonder that the young Amyas, when the first burst of grief was over, and he knew again where he stood, felt that a new life had begun for him; that his mother was no more to think and act for him only, but that he must think and act for his mother. And so it was, that on the very day after his father's funeral, when school hours were over, instead of coming straight home, he walked boldly into Sir Richard Grenville's house, and asked to see his godfather.

"You must be my father, now, sir," he said firmly.

And Sir Richard looked at the boy's broad strong face, and swore a great and holy oath, that he would be a father to him, and a brother to his mother, for Christ's sake.

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After that all things went on at Burrough as before; and Amyas rode, and shot, and boxed, and wandered on the quay at Sir Richard's side; for Mrs. Leigh was too wise a woman to alter one tittle of the training which her husband had thought best for his younger boy. It was enough that her elder son had of his own accord taken to that form of life in which she in her secret heart would fain have moulded both her children. For Frank had won himself honour at home and abroad; first at the school at Bideford, then at Exeter College, where he had become a friend of Sir Philip Sidney's, and many another young man of rank and promise; and next, in the summer of 1572, on his way to the University of Heidelberg, he had gone to Paris, with (luckily for him) letters of recommendation to Walsingham at the English Embassy: by which letters he not only fell in a second time with Philip Sidney, but saved his own life (as Sidney did his) in the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day. At Heidelberg he had stayed two years, winning fresh honour from all who knew him, and resisting all Sidney's entreaties to follow him into Italy. For, scorning to be a burden to his parents, he had become at Heidelberg tutor to two young German princes, whom, after living with them at their father's house for a year or more, he at last, to his own great delight, took with him down to Padua, "to perfect them," as he wrote home, "according to his insufficiency, in all princely studies." Sidney was now returned to England; but Frank found friends enough without him, such letters of recommendation and diplomas did he carry from I know not how many princes, magnificoes, and learned doctors, who had fallen in love with the learning, modesty, and virtue of the fair young Englishman.

At last, a few months before his father died, he had taken back his pupils to their home in Germany, from whence he was dismissed, as he wrote, with rich gifts; and then Mrs. Leigh's heart beat high, at the thought that the wanderer would return: but, alas! within a month after his father's death, came a long letter from Frank, describing the Alps, and the valleys of the Waldenses, and setting forth how at Padua he had made the acquaintance of that illustrious scholar and light of the age, Stephanus Parmenius (commonly called from his native place, Budæus), who had visited Geneva with him, and

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heard the disputations of their most learned doctors, which both he and Budæus disliked for their hard judgments both of God and man. And after that, though he wrote again and again to the father whom he fancied living, no letter in return reached him from home for nearly two years; till, fearing some mishap, he hurried back to England, to find his mother a widow, and his brother Amyas gone to the South Seas with Captain Drake of Plymouth. And yet, even then, after years of absence, he was not allowed to remain at home. For Sir Richard, to whom idleness was a thing horrible and unrighteous, would have him up and doing again before six months were over, and sent him off to court to Lord Hunsdon.

There, being as delicately beautiful as his brother was huge and strong, he had speedily, by Carew's interest and that of Sidney and his uncle Leicester, found entrance into some office in the Queen's household; and he was now basking in the full sunshine of Court favour.

But why did Amyas go to the South Seas? Amyas went to the South Seas for two causes, each of which has, before now, sent many a lad to far worse places: first, because of an old schoolmaster; secondly, because of a young beauty. I will take them in order and explain.

Vindex Brimblecombe, whilome servitor of Exeter College, Oxford (commonly called Sir Vindex, after the fashion of the times), was, in those days, master of the grammar-school of Bideford. He was, at root, a godly and kind-hearted pedant enough; but, like most schoolmasters in the old flogging days, had his heart pretty well hardened by long, baneful licence to inflict pain at will on those weaker than himself; a power healthful enough for the victim, but for the executioner pretty certain to cradicate, from all but the noblest spirits, every trace of chivalry and tenderness for the weak, as well, often, as all self-control and command of temper. Be that as it may, old Sir Vindex had heart enough to feel that it was now his duty to take especial care of the fatherless boy, to whom he tried to teach his *qui, quæ, quod*; but the only outcome of that new sense of responsibility was a rapid increase in the number of floggings, which rose from about two a week to one per diem.

For all this while, Amyas had never for a moment lost sight of his darling desire for a sea-life; and when he could

not wander on the quay and stare at the shipping, or go down to the pebble-ridge at Northam, and there sit, devouring with hungry eyes, the great expanse of ocean, which seemed to woo him outward into boundless space, he used to console himself, in school hours, by drawing ships and imaginary charts upon his slate, instead of minding his "humanities."

Now it befell, upon an afternoon, that he was very busy at a map, or bird's-eye view of an island, whereon was a great castle, and at the gate thereof a dragon, terrible to see; while in the foreground came that which was meant for a gallant ship, with a great flag aloft, but which, by reason of the forest of lances with which it was crowded, looked much more like a porcupine carrying a sign-post; and, at the roots of those lances, many little round o's whereby were signified the heads of Amyas and his school-fellows, who were about to slay that dragon, and rescue the beautiful princess who dwelt in that enchanted tower. To behold which marvel of art, all the other boys at the same desk must needs club their heads together, and with the more security, because Sir Vindex, as was his custom after dinner, was lying back in his chair, and he slept the sleep of the just.

But when Amyas, by special instigation of the evil spirit who haunts successful artists, proceeded further to introduce, heedless of perspective, a rock, on which stood the lively portraiture of Sir Vindex—nose, spectacles, gown, and all; and in his hand a brandished rod, while out of his mouth a label shrieked after the runaways, "You come back!" while a similar label replied from the gallant bark, "Good-bye, master!" the shoving and tittering rose to such a pitch, that Cerberus awoke, and demanded sternly what the noise was about. To which, of course, there was no answer.

"You, of course, Leigh! Come up, sir, and show me your exercitation."

Now of Amyas's exercitation not a word was written; and, moreover, he was in the very article of putting the last touches to Mr. Brimblecombe's portrait. Whereon, to the astonishment of all hearers, he made answer—

"All in good time, sir!" and went on drawing.

"In good time, sir! Insolent, *veni et vapula!*"

But Amyas went on drawing.

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"Come hither, sirrah, or I'll flay you alive !"

"Wait a bit," answered Amyas.

The old gentleman jumped up, ferula in hand, and darted across the school, and saw himself upon the fatal slate.

"*Proh flagitium !* what have we here, villain ?" and clutching at his victim he raised the cane. Whereupon, with a serene and cheerful countenance, up rose the mighty form of Amyas Leigh, a head and shoulders above his tormentor, and that slate descended on the bald coxcomb of Sir Vindex Brimblecombe, with so shrewd a blow, that slate and pate cracked at the same instant, and the poor pedagogue dropped to the floor, and lay for dead.

After which Amyas arose, and walked out of the school, and so quietly home; and having taken counsel with himself, went to his mother, and said, "Please, mother, I've broken the schoolmaster's head."

"Broken his head, thou wicked boy !" shrieked the poor widow; "what didst do that for ?"

"I can't tell," said Amyas penitently; "I couldn't help it. It looked so smooth, and bald, and round, and—you know ?"

"I know ? O wicked boy ! thou hast given place to the devil; and now, perhaps, thou hast killed him."

"Killed the devil ?" asked Amyas, hopefully but doubtfully.

"No, killed the schoolmaster, sirrah ! Is he dead ?"

"I don't think he's dead; his coxcomb sounded too hard for that. But had not I better go and tell Sir Richard ?"

The poor mother could hardly help laughing, in spite of her terror, at Amyas's perfect coolness (which was not in the least meant for insolence), and being at her wits' end, sent him, as usual, to his godfather.

Amyas rehearsed his story again, with pretty nearly the same exclamations and questions, to which he gave pretty nearly the same answers; and then—

"What was he going to do to you then, sirrah ?"

"Flog me, because I could not write my exercise, and so drew a picture of him instead."

"What ! art afraid of being flogged ?"

"Not a bit; besides, I'm too much accustomed to it; but I was busy, and he was in such a desperate hurry;

and, oh, sir, if you had but seen his bald head, you would have broken it yourself ! ”

Now Sir Richard had, twenty years ago, in like place, and very much in like manner, broken the head of Vindex Brimblecombe's father, schoolmaster in his day, and therefore had a precedent to direct him; and he answered—

“ Amyas, sirrah ! those who cannot obey will never be fit to rule. If thou canst not keep discipline now, thou wilt never make a company or a crew keep it when thou art grown. Dost mind that, sirrah ? ”

“ Yes,” said Amyas.

“ Then go back to school this moment, sir, and be flogged.”

“ Very well,” said Amyas, considering that he had got off very cheaply; while Sir Richard, as soon as he was out of the room, lay back in his chair and laughed till he cried again.

So Amyas went back, and said that he was come to be flogged; whereon the old schoolmaster, whose pate had been plastered meanwhile, wept tears of joy over the returning prodigal, and then gave him such a switching as he did not forget for eight-and-forty hours.

But that evening Sir Richard sent for old Vindex, who entered, trembling, cap in hand; and having primed him with a cup of sack, said—

“ Well, Mr. Schoolmaster ! My godson has been somewhat too much for you to-day. There are a couple of nobles to pay the doctor.”

“ O Sir Richard, *gratias tibi et Domino !* but the boy hits shrewdly hard. Nevertheless I have repaid him in inverse kind, and set him an imposition, to learn me one of Phædrus his fables, Sir Richard, if you do not think it too much.”

“ Which, then ? The one about the man who brought up a lion's cub, and was eaten by him in play at last ? ”

“ Ah, Sir Richard ! you have always a merry wit. But, indeed, the boy is a brave boy, and a quick boy, Sir Richard, but more forgetful than Lethe; and—*sapienti loquor*—it were well if he were away, for I shall never see him again without my head aching. Moreover, he put my son Jack upon the fire last Wednesday, as you would put a football, though he is a year older, your worship, because, he, said, he looked so like a roasting pig, Sir Richard.”

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" Alas, poor Jack ! "

" And what's more, your worship, he is *pugnax*, *bellicosus*, *gladiator*, a fire-eater and swashbuckler, beyond all Christian measure. My Jack tells me, last Tuesday week he fell upon a young man of Barnstaple, Sir Richard, a hosier's man, sir, and *plebeius* (which I consider unfit for one of his blood), and, moreover, a man full grown, and as big as either of us (Vindex stood five feet four in his high-heeled shoes), and smote him clean over the quay into the mud, because he said that there was a prettier maid in Barnstaple (your worship will forgive my speaking of such toys, to which my fidelity compels me) than ever Bideford could show; and then offered to do the same to any man who dare say that Mistress Rose Salterne, his Worship the Mayor's daughter, was not the fairest lass in all Devon."

" Eh ? Say that over again, my good sir," quoth Sir Richard, who had thus arrived, as we have seen, at the second count of the indictment. " I say, good sir, whence dost thou hear all these pretty stories ? "

" My son Jack, Sir Richard, my son Jack, *ingeniultus puer*."

" How old is that fat-witted son of thine ? "

" Sixteen, Sir Richard; but that is not his fault, indeed ! "

" Nay, I suppose he would still be sucking his thumb if he dared. Why is not the rogue at Oxford, with a murrain on him, instead of lurching about here carrying ales, and ogling the maidens ? "

" I had hoped, Sir Richard—and therefore I said it was not his fault—but there was never a servitorship at Exeter open."

" Go to, man—go to ! I will speak to my brethren of the Trust, and to Oxford he shall go this autumn, or else to Exeter gaol for a strong rogue, and a masterless man. Do you hear ? "

" Hear ?—oh, sir, yes ! and return thanks. Jack shall go, Sir Richard, doubt it not—I were mad else; and, Sir Richard, may I go too ? "

And therewith Vindex vanished, and Sir Richard enjoyed a second mighty laugh, which brought in Lady Grenville, who possibly had overheard the whole; for the first words he said were--

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"I think, my sweet life, we had better go up to Burrough."

So to Burrough they went; and after much talk, and many tears, matters were so concluded that Amyas Leigh found himself riding joyfully towards Plymouth, by the side of Sir Richard, and being handed over to Captain Drake, vanished for three years from the good town of Bideford.

And now he is returned in triumph, and the observed of all observers; and looks round and round, and sees all faces whom he expects, except one; and that the one which he had rather see than his mother's? He is not quite sure. Shame on himself!

And now the prayers being ended, the Rector ascends the pulpit, and begins his sermon on the text:—

"The heaven and the heaven of heavens are the Lord's; the whole earth hath he given to the children of men." And when, the sermon ended, the Communion Service had begun, and the bread and the wine were given to those five mariners, every gallant gentleman who stood near them (for the press would not allow of more) knelt and received the elements with them as a thing of course, and then rose to join with heart and voice not merely in the *Gloria in Excelsis*, but in the *Te Deum*, which was the closing act of all. And no sooner had the clerk given out the first verse of that great hymn, than it was taken up by five hundred voices within the church, in bass and tenor, treble and alto; the chant was caught up by the crowd outside, and rang away over roof and river, up to the woods of Annery, and down to the marshes of the Taw, in wave on wave of harmony. And as it died away, the shipping in the river made answer with their thunder, and the crowd streamed out again toward the Bridge Head, whither Sir Richard Grenville, and Sir John Chichester, and Mr. Salterne, the Mayor, led the five heroes of the day to await the pageant which had been prepared in honour of them. And as they went by, there were few in the crowd who did not press forward to shake them by the hand, and not only them, but their parents and kinsfolk who walked behind, till Mrs. Leigh, her stately joy quite broken down at last, could only answer between her sobs, "Go along, poor people—God-a-mercy, go along—and God send you all such sons!"

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"God give me back mine!" cried an old red-cloaked dame in the crowd; and then, struck by some hidden impulse, she sprang forward, and catching hold of young Amyas's sleeve—

"Kind sir! dear sir! For Christ His sake answer a poor old widow woman!"

"What is it, dame?" quoth Amyas, gently enough.

"Did you see my son to the Indies?—my son Salvation?"

"Salvation?" replied he, with the air of one who recollected the name.

"Yes, sure, Salvation Yeo, of Clovelly. A tall man and black, and sweareth awfully in his talk, the Lord forgive him!"

Amyas recollected now. It was the name of the sailor who had given him the wondrous horn five years ago.

"My good dame," said he, "the Indies are a very large place, and your son may be safe and sound enough there, without my having seen him. I knew one Salvation Yeo. But he must have come with——. By the bye, godfather, has Mr. Oxenham come home?"

There was a dead silence for a moment among the gentlemen round; and then Sir Richard said solemnly, and in a low voice, turning away from the old dame—

"Amyas, Mr. Oxenham has not come home; and from the day he sailed, no word has been heard of him and all his crew."

"And no news of him whatsoever?"

"None; but that the year after he sailed, a ship belonging to Andrew Barker, of Bristol, took out of a Spanish caravel, somewhere off the Honduras, his two brass guns; but whence they came the Spaniard knew not, having bought them at Nombre de Dios."

"Yes!" cried the old woman; "they brought home the guns and never brought home my boy!"

"There is a rose-noble for you!" said Mrs. Leigh.

"And there another!" said Sir Richard. And in a few minutes four or five gold coins were in her hand. But the old dame did but look wonderingly at the gold a moment, and then—

"Ah! dear gentles, God's blessing on you, and Mr. Cary's mighty good to me already; but gold won't buy back childer! Oh! young gentleman! young gentleman!"

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make me a promise; if you want God's blessing on you this day, bring me back my boy, if you find him sailing on the seas! Bring him back, and an old widow's blessing be on you!"

Amyas promised—what else could he do?—and the group hurried on; but the lad's heart was heavy in the midst of joy, with the thought of John Oxenham.

However, he was bound in all courtesy to turn his attention now to the show which had been prepared in his honour; and which was really well enough worth seeing and hearing.

First, preceded by the waits, came along the bridge toward the town-hall, a device prepared by the good Rector, wherein on a great banner was depicted Queen Elizabeth herself, in ample ruff and farthingale, a Bible in one hand and a sword in the other. Which having been received with due applause, a well-bedizened lad, having in his cap as a posy "Loyalty," stepped forward, and delivered himself of the following verses:—

"Oh, great Eliza! oh, world-famous crew!
Which shall I hail more blest, your queen or you?
While without other either falls to wrack,
And light must eyes, or eyes their light must lack.
She without you, a diamond sunk in mine,
Its worth unprized, so self alone must shine;
You without her, like hands bereft of head,
Like Ajax rage, by blindfold lust misled.
She light, you eyes; she head, and you the hands,
In fair proportion knit by heavenly bands:
Servants in queen, and queen in servants blest;
Your only glory, how to serve her best;
And hers how best the adventurous might to guide,
Which knows no check of foemen, wind, or tide,
So fair Eliza's spotless fame may fly
Triumphant round the globe, and shake th'astounded sky!"

with which sufficiently bad verses Loyalty passed on, and next, amid much cheering, two great tinsel fish, a salmon, and a trout, symbolical of the wealth of Torridge, waddled along, by means of two human legs and a staff apiece, which protruded from the fishes' stomachs. They drew (or seemed to draw, for half the 'prentices in the town were shoving it behind, and cheering on the panting monarchs of the flood) a car wherein sate, amid reeds and river-flags, three or four pretty girls in robes of grey-blue spangled with gold, their heads wreathed one with a crown

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of the sweet bog-myrtle, another with hops and white convolvulus, the third with pale heather and golden fern. They stopped opposite Amyas; and she of the myrtle wreath, rising and bowing to him and the company, began with a pretty blush to say her say :—

“ Hither from my moorland home,
Nymph of Torridge, proud I come ;
Leaving fen and furzy brake,
Haunt of eft and spotted snake,
Where to fill mine urns I use,
Daily with Atlantic dew ;
While beside the reedy flood
Wild duck leads her paddling brood.
For this morn, as Phœbus gay
Chased through heaven the night mist grey,
Close beside me, pranked in pride,
Sister Tamar rose, and cried,
‘ Sluggard, up ! ’Tis holiday,
In the lowlands far away.
Hark ; how jocund Plymouth bells,
Wandering up through mazy dells,
Call me down, with smiles to hail
My daring Drake’s returning sail.’
Thine alone ? I answer’d. Nay ;
Mine as well the joy to-day.
For joy ! the girdled globe around
Eliza’s name henceforth shall sound,
Whose venturous fleets to conquest start,
Where ended once the seaman’s chart,
While circling Sol his steps shall count
Henceforth from Thulé’s western mount,
And lead new rulers round the seas
From farthest Cassiterides.
Ye, meanwhile, around the earth
Bear the prize of manful worth.
Yet a nobler meed than gold
Waits for Albion’s children bold ;
Great Eliza’s virgin hand
Welcomes you to Fairyland,
While your native Naiads bring
Native wreaths as offering.
Simple though their show may be,
Britain’s worship in them see.
’Tis not price, nor outward fairness,
Gives the victor’s palm its rareness.
Simplest tokens can impart
Noble throb to noble heart :
Græcia, prize thy parsley crown,
Boast thy laurel, Cæsar’s town ;
Moorland myrtle still shall be
Badge of Devon’s Chivalry ! ”

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And so ending, she took the wreath of fragrant gale from her own head, and, stooping from the car, placed it on the head of Amyas Leigh, who made answer—

“There is no place like home, my fair mistress; and no scent to my taste like this old home-scent in all the spice-islands that I ever sailed by !”

“Her song was not so bad,” said Sir Richard to Lady Bath—“but how came she to hear Plymouth bells at Tamar-head, full fifty miles away ? That’s too much of a poet’s licence, is it not ?”

“The river-nymphs, as daughters of Oceanus, and thus of immortal parentage, are bound to possess organs of more than mortal keenness; but, as you say, the song was not so bad—crudite, as well as prettily conceived—and, saving for a certain rustic simplicity and monosyllabic baldness, smacks rather of the forests of Castaly than those of Torridge.”

So spake my Lady Bath; whom Sir Richard wisely answered not; for she was a terribly learned member of the college of critics; so Sir Richard answered not, but answer was made for him.

“Since the whole choir of Muses, Madam, have migrated to the Court of Whitehall, no wonder if some dews of Parnassus should fertilise at times even our Devon moors.”

The speaker was a tall and slim young man, some five-and-twenty years old, of so rare and delicate a beauty, that it seemed that some Greek statue, or rather one of those pensive and pious knights whom the old German artists took delight to paint, had condescended to tread a while this work-day earth in living flesh and blood.

Master Frank Leigh, for he it was, was dressed in the very extravagance of the fashion—not so much from vanity as from that delicate instinct of self-respect which would keep some men spruce and spotless from one year’s end to another upon a desert island; “for,” as Frank used to say in his sententious way, “Mr. Frank Leigh at least beholds me, though none else be by; and why should I be more discourteous to him than I permit others to be ?”

“Ah, my silver-tongued scholar ! and are you, then, the poet ? or have you been drawing on the inexhaustible bank of your friend Raleigh, or my cousin Sidney ? or has our Spenser lent you a few unpublished leaves from some fresh Shepherd’s Calendar ?”

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"Had either, Madam, of that cynosural triad been within call of my most humble importunities, your ears had been delectate with far nobler melody."

"But not our eyes with fairer faces, eh? Go, sir," said my lady; "the pageant stays your supreme pleasure."

And away went Mr. Frank as master of the revels, to bring up the 'prentices' pageant.

And on they came, headed by a giant of buckram and pasteboard armour, forth of whose stomach looked, like a clock-face in a steeple, a human visage, to be greeted, as was the fashion then, by a volley of quips and puns from high and low.

Young Mr. William Cary, of Clovelly, who was the wit of those parts, opened the fire by asking him whether he were Goliath, Gogmagog, or Grantorto in the romance; for giants' names always began with a G. To which the giant answered—

"A giant I, Earl Ordulf men me call,—
'Gainst Paynim foes Devon's champion tall;
In single fight six thousand Turks I slew;
Pull'd off a lion's head, and ate it too?
With one shrewd blow, to let Saint Edward in,
I smote the gates of Exeter in twain:
Till aged grown, by angels warn'd in dream,
I built an abbey fair by Tavy stream.
But treacherous time hath tripped my glories up,
The staunch old hound must yield to stauncher pup;
Here's one so tall as I, and twice so bold,
Where I took only cuffs, takes good red gold.
From pole to pole resound his wondrous works,
Who slew more Spaniards than I ere slew Turks;
I strode across the Tavy stream: but he
Strode round the world and back; and here 'a be!"

"Oh, bathos!" said Lady Bath, while the 'prentices shouted applause. "Is this hedge-bantling to be fathered on you, Mr. Frank?"

"It is necessary, by all laws of the drama, Madam," said Frank with a sly smile, "that the speech and the speaker shall fit each other. Pass on, Earl Ordulf; a more learned worthy waits."

Whereon, up came a fresh member of the procession; namely no less a person than Vindex Brimblecombe, the ancient schoolmaster, with five-and-forty boys at his heels, who, halting, pulled out his spectacles, and thus signified his forgiveness of his whilom broken head—

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"That the world should have been circumnavigated, ladies and gentles, were matter enough for jubilation to the student of Herodotus and Plato, Plinius and——ahem! much more when the circumnavigators are Britons; more again, when inhabitants of Devon; but, most of all, men of Bideford School. O renowned school! O school-boys ennobled by fellowship with him! O most happy pedagogue, to whom it has befallen to have chastised a circumnavigator, and, like another Chiron, trained another Hercules; yet more than Hercules, for he placed his pillars on the ocean shore, and then returned; but my scholar's voyage——"

"Hark how the old fox is praising himself all along on the sly," said Cary.

"Mr. William, Mr. William, peace; *silentium*, my graceless pupil. Urge the foaming steed, and strike terror into the rapid stag, but meddle not with matters too high for thee."

"He has given you the dor now, sir," said Lady Bath; "let the old man say his say."
And the old pedant mouthed out—

"Famed Argo ship, that noble chip, by doughty Jason's steering,
Brought back to Greece the golden fleece, from Colchis home careering;
But now her fame is put to shame, while new Devonian Argo
Round earth doth run in wake of sun, and brings a wealthier cargo."

"Runs with a right fa-lal-la," observed Cary; "and would go nobly to a fiddle and a big drum."

"Ye Spaniards, quake! our doughty Drake a royal swan is tested,
On wing and oar, from shore to shore, the raging main who breasted:—
But never needs to chant his deeds, like swan that lies a-dying,
So far his name by trump of fame, around the sphere is flying."

"Hillo ho! schoolmaster!" shouted a voice from behind; "move on, and make way for Father Neptune!"

And diving through the crowd, the pedagogue vanished, while Father Neptune, crowned with seaweeds, a trident in one hand and a live dog-fish in the other, swaggered up the street surrounded by a tall bodyguard of mariners, and followed by a great banner, on which was depicted a globe, with Drake's ship sailing thereon upside down.

"Now lads!" cried Neptune; "hand me my parable that's writ for me, and here goeth!" And at the top of his bull voice, he began roaring—

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"I am King Neptune bold,
The ruler of the seas ;
I don't understand much singing upon land,
But I hope what I say will please.

"Here be five Bideford men,
Which have sail'd the world around,
And I watch'd them well, as they all can tell,
And brought them home safe and sound.

"For it is the men of Devon,
To see them I take delight,
Both to tack and to hull, and to heave and to pull,
And to prove themselves in fight.

"For the sea my realm it is,
As good Queen Bess's is the land ;
So freely come again, all merry Devon men,
And there's old Neptune's hand."

"Holla, boys ! holla ! Blow up, Triton, and bring forward the freedom of the seas."

Triton, roaring through a conch, brought forward a cockle-shell full of salt water, and delivered it solemnly to Amyas, who, of course, put a noble into it, and returned it after Grenville had done the same.

"Holla, Dick Admiral !" cried Neptune, who was pretty far gone in liquor ; "we knew thou hadst a right English heart in thee, for all thou standest there as taut as a Don who has swallowed his rapier."

"Grammercy, stop thy bellowing, fellow, and on ; for thou smellest vilely of fish."

"Everything smells sweet in its right place. I'm going home"; and on rolled the monarch of the seas ; and so the pageant ended.

The moment Amyas had an opportunity, he asked his brother Frank, somewhat peevishly, where Rose Salterne was.

"What ! the mayor's daughter ? With her uncle by Wiltshire, I believe."

Now cunning Master Frank, whose daily wish was to seek peace and ensue it," told Amyas this, because he must needs speak the truth : but he was purposed at the same time to speak as little truth as he could, for fear of accidents ; and, therefore, omitted to tell his brother that he, two days before, had entreated Rose Salterne herself to appear as the nymph of Torridge ; to which hour she, who had no objection either to show her

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pretty face, to recite pretty poetry, or to be trained there by the cynosure of North Devon, would have assented willingly, but that her father stopped the pretty project by a peremptory countermove, and packed her off, in spite of her tears, to the said uncle on the Atlantic cliffs, after which he went up to Burrough, and laughed over the whole matter with Mrs. Leigh.

“ I am but a burgher, Mrs. Leigh, and you a lady of blood; but I am too proud to let any man say that Sir Simon Salterne threw his daughter at your son's head;—not if you were an empress ! ”

“ And to speak truth, Mr. Salterne, there are your gallants enough in the country quarrelling about the pretty face every day, without making her a tournament queen to tilt about.”

“ Which was very true; for during the three years Amyas's absence, Rose Salterne had grown into so beautiful a girl of eighteen, that half North Devon was mad about the “ Rose of Torridge,” as she was called; and there was not a young gallant for ten miles round who would not have gone to Jerusalem to win her.

And now, to add to the general confusion, home came young Amyas Leigh, more desperately in love with her than ever.

CHAPTER III

EARLY next morning Amyas rose and dressed, and started for a bathe on his beloved old pebble-ridge. As he passed his mother's door, he could not help looking in. The dim light of morning showed him the bed; but his pillow had not been pressed that night. His mother, in her long white night-dress, was kneeling at the other end of the chamber at her prie-dieu, absorbed in devotion. Silently he slipped in without a word, and knelt down at her side. She turned, smiled, passed her arm around him, and went on silently with her prayers. Why not? They were for him, and he knew it, and prayed also.

And so Amyas walked down to the pebble-ridge, where the surges of the bay have defeated their own fury by rolling up in the course of ages a rampart of grey boulder-stones, some two miles long. Sniffing the keen salt air like a young sea-dog, he stripped and plunged into the breakers, and dived, and rolled, and tossed about the foam with stalwart arms, till he heard himself hailed from off the shore, and looking up, saw standing on the top of the rampart the tall figure of his cousin Eustace.

Amyas was half disappointed at his coming; for, love-lorn rascal, he had been dreaming all the way thither of Rose Salterne, and had no wish for a companion who would prevent his dreaming of her all the way back. Nevertheless, not having seen Eustace for three years, it was but civil to scramble out and dress, while his cousin walked up and down upon the turf.

Eustace Leigh was the son of a younger brother of Leigh of Burrough, who had more or less cut himself off from his family, and indeed from his countrymen, by remaining a Papist. True, though born a Papist, he had not always been one; for, like many of the gentry, he had become a Protestant under Edward the Sixth, and then a Papist again under Mary. But, to his honour be it said, at that point he had stopped, having too much honesty to turn Protestant a second time, as hundreds did, at Elizabeth's accession. So a Papist he remained, living out of the way of the world in a great, rambling,

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dark house, still called "Chapel," on the Atlantic cliffs, in Moorwinstow parish, not far from Sir Richard Grenville's house of Stow.

Eustace was a tall, handsome, light-complexioned man, with a huge upright forehead, a very small mouth, and a dry and set expression of face, which was always trying to get free, or rather to seem free, and indulge in smiles and dimples which were proper; for one ought to have Christian love, and if one had love one ought to be cheerful, and when people were cheerful they smiled; and therefore he would smile, and tried to do so.

He sat down beside Amyas on the pebbles, and looked at him all over out of the corners of his eyes very gently, as if he did not wish to hurt him, or even the flies on his back; and Amyas faced right round, and looked him full in the face, with the heartiest of smiles, and held out a lion's paw, which Eustace took rapturously, and a great shaking of hands ensued.

"Ah, my dearest cousin!" said Eustace, "how disappointed I was this morning at finding I had arrived just a day too late to witness your triumph! But I hastened to your home as soon as I could, and learning from your mother that I should find you here, hurried down to bid you welcome again to Devon."

"Well, old lad, it does look very natural to see you. I often used to think of you walking the deck o' nights. Uncle and the girls are all right then? But is the old pony dead yet? And how's Dick the smith, and Nancy? Grown a fine maid by now, I warrant. 'Slid, it seems half a life that I've been away."

"And you really thought of your poor cousin? Be sure that he, too, thought of you, and offered up nightly his weak prayers for your safety (doubtless not without avail) to those saints, to whom would that you——"

"Halt there, coz. If they are half as good fellows as you and I take them for, they'll help me without asking."

"They have helped you, Amyas."

"Maybe; I'd have done as much, I'm sure, for them, if I'd been in their place."

As he spoke, up came Frank, and, after due greetings, sat down beside them on the ridge.

Eustace, having immediate business, he said, in Northam town, and then in Bideford, left them to lounge

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for another half-hour on the beach, and then walk across the smooth sheet of turf to the little white fishing village, which stands some two miles above the bar, at the meeting of the Torridge and the Taw.

Now Eustace Leigh, as we have seen, told his cousins that he was going to Northam : but he did not tell them that his point was really the same as their own, namely, Appledore : and, therefore, after having satisfied his conscience by going as far as the very nearest house in Northam village, he struck away sharp to the left across the fields ; whereby he went several miles out of his road ; and also, as is the wont of crooked spirits, only outwitted himself. For his cousins going merrily, like honest men, along the straight road across the turf, arrived in Appledore, opposite the little " Mariner's Rest " Inn, just in time to see what Eustace had taken so much trouble to hide from them, namely, four of Mr. Thomas Leigh's horses standing at the door, held by his groom, saddles and mail-bags on back, and mounting three of them, Eustace Leigh and two strange gentlemen.

" There's one lie already this morning," growled Amyas ; " he told us he was going to Northam."

" And we do not know that he has not been there," blandly suggested Frank.

" Why, you are as bad as he, to help him out with such a fetch."

" He may have changed his mind."

" Bless your pure imagination, my sweet boy," said Amyas, laying his great hand on Frank's head, and mimicking his mother's manner. " I say, dear Frank, let's step into this shop and buy a pennyworth of whipcord."

" What do you want with whipcord, man ? "

" To spin my top, to be sure."

" Top ? how long hast had a top ? "

" I'll buy one, then, and save my conscience ; but the upshot of this sport I must see. Why may not I have an excuse ready made as well as Master Eustace ? "

So saying, he pulled Frank into the little shop, unobserved by the party at the inn door.

" What strange cattle has he been importing now ? Look at that three-legged fellow, trying to get aloft on the wrong side. How he claws at his horse's ribs like a cat scratching an elder stem ! "

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The three-legged man was a tall, meek-looking person who had bedizened himself with gorgeous garments, a great feather, and a sword so long and broad, that it differed little in size from the very thin and stiff shanks between which it wandered uncomfortably.

"Young David in Saul's weapons," said Frank. "He had better not go in them, for he certainly has not proved them."

At last the man, by dint of a chair, was mounted safely, while his fellow-stranger, a burly, coarse-looking man, equally gay, and rather more handy, made so fierce a rush at his saddle, that, like "vaulting ambition which o'erleaps his selle," he "fell on t'other side"; or would have fallen, had he not been brought up short by the shoulders of the ostler at his off-stirrup. In which shock off came hat and feather.

"Pardie, the bulldog-faced one is a fighting man. Dost see, Frank? he has had his head broken."

"That scar came not, my son, but by a pair of most Catholic and apostolic scissors. My gentle buzzard, that is a priest's tonsure."

"Hang the dog! Oh, that the sailors may but see it, and put him over the quay head. I've half a mind to go and do it myself."

"My dear Amyas," said Frank, laying two fingers on his arm, "these men, whosoever they are, are the guests of our uncle, and therefore the guests of our family."

"Murrain on you, old Franky, you never let a man speak his mind, and shame the devil."

"I have lived long enough in courts, old Amyas without a murrain on you, to have found out first, that it is not so easy to shame the devil; and secondly, that it is better to outwit him; and the only way to do that sweet chuck, is very often not to speak your mind at all."

"Well, thou art too good for this world, that's certain so we will go home to breakfast. Those rogues are out of sight by now."

Nevertheless, Amyas was not proof against the temptation of going over to the inn door, and asking who were the gentlemen who went with Mr. Leigh.

"Gentlemen of Wales," said the ostler, "who came last night in a pinnace from Milford Haven, and the names, Mr. Morgan Evans and Mr. Evan Morgans."

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“ Mr. Judas Iscariot and Mr. Iscariot Judas,” said Amyas between his teeth, and then observed aloud, “ that the Welsh gentlemen seemed rather poor horsemen.”

“ So I said to Mr. Leigh’s groom, your worship. But he says that those parts be so uncommon rough and mountainous, that the poor gentlemen, you see, being enforced to hunt on foot, have no such opportunities as young gentlemen hereabout, like your worship; whom God preserve, and send a virtuous lady, and one worthy of you.”

In the meanwhile Messrs. Evans and Morgans were riding away, as fast as the rough by-lanes would let them, along the fresh coast of the bay, steering carefully clear of Northam town on the one hand, and on the other of Portledge, where dwelt that most Protestant justice of the peace, Mr. Coffin. And it was well for them that neither Amyas Leigh, nor indeed any other loyal Englishman, was by when they entered, as they shortly did, the lonely woods which stretch along the southern wall of the bay. For there Eustace Leigh pulled up short; and both he and his groom, leaping from their horses, knelt down humbly in the wet grass, and implored the blessing of the two valiant gentlemen of Wales, who, having graciously bestowed it with three fingers apiece, became thenceforth no longer Morgan Evans and Evan Morgans, Welshmen and gentlemen; but Father Parsons and Father Campian, Jesuits, and gentlemen in no sense in which that word is applied in this book.

After a few minutes, the party were again in motion, ambling steadily and cautiously along the high table-land, towards Moorwinstow in the west.

But they were not destined to reach their point as peaceably as they could have wished. For just as they got opposite Clovelly Dike, the huge old Roman encampment which stands about midway in their journey, they heard a halloo from the valley below, answered by a fainter one far ahead. At which, like a couple of rogues Father Campian and Father Parsons looked at each other, and both stared round at the wild, desolate, open pasture, and the great dark furze-grown banks above their heads when up from the ditch close beside them,

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as if rising out of the earth, burst through the furze-bushes an armed cavalier.

"Pardon, gentlemen!" shouted he. "Stand for your lives!"

"*Mater cælorum!*" moaned Campian: while Parsons who, as all the world knows, was a blustering bully enough (at least with his tongue), asked: "What a murrain right had he to stop honest folks on the Queen's highway?" confirming the same with a mighty oath. But the horseman, taking no notice of his hint, dashed across the nose of Eustace Leigh's horse, with a "Hillo, old lad! where ridest so early?" and peering down for a moment into the ruts of the narrow track-way, stuck spurs into his horse, shouting, "A fresh slot! right away for Hartland! Forward, gentlemen all! follow, follow, follow!"

"Who is this roysterer?" asked Parsons loftily.

"Will Cary, of Clovelly, an awful heretic; and here are more behind."

And as he spoke four or five more mounted gallants plunged in and out of the great dikes, and thundered on behind the party; whose horses, quite understanding what game was up, burst into full gallop, neighing and squealing; and in another minute the hapless Jesuits were hurling along over moor and moss after a "hart of grease."

Parsons, who, though a vulgar bully, was no coward, supported the character of Mr. Evan Morgans well enough; and he would have really enjoyed himself, had he not been in agonies of fear lest those precious saddle-bags in front of him should break from their lashings, and rolling to the earth, expose to the hoofs of heretic horses, perhaps to the gaze of heretic eyes, such a cargo of bulls, dispensations, secret correspondences, seditious tracts, and so forth, that at the very thought of their being seen his head felt loose upon his shoulders.

Now riding on his quarter, not in the rough track-way like a cockney, but through the soft heather like a sportsman, was a very gallant knight whom we all know well by this time, Richard Grenville by name; who had made Mr. Cary and the rest his guests the night before, and then ridden out with them at five o'clock that morning after the wholesome early ways of the time, to rouse

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well-known stag in the glens of Buckish, by help of Mr. Coffin's hounds from Portledge.

"I hope Mr. Leigh will do me the honour of introducing me to his guests. I should be sorry, and Mr. Cary also, that any gentle strangers should become neighbours of ours, even for a day, without our knowing who they are who honour our western Thule with a visit; and showing them ourselves all due requital for the compliment of their presence."

After which, the only thing which poor Eustace could do (especially as it was spoken loud enough for all bystanders) was to introduce in due form Mr. Evan Morgans and Mr. Morgan Evans.

"Gentlemen," said Sir Richard blandly, cap in hand, "I fear that your mails must have been somewhat in your way in this unexpected gallop. If you will permit my groom, who is behind, to disencumber you of them and carry them to Chapel, you will both confer an honour on me, and be enabled yourselves to see the mort more pleasantly."

A twinkle of fun, in spite of all his efforts, played about Sir Richard's eye as he gave this searching hint. The two Welsh gentlemen stammered out clumsy thanks; and pleading great haste and fatigue from a long journey, contrived to fall to the rear and vanish with their guides, as soon as the slot had been recovered.

"Will!" said Sir Richard, pushing alongside of young Cary.

"Your worship?"

"Jesuits, Will!"

"May the father of lies fly away with them over the nearest cliff!"

"He will not do that while this Irish trouble is about. Those fellows are come to practise here for Saunders and Desmond."

"Perhaps they have a consecrated banner in their bag, the scoundrels! Shall I and young Coffin on and stop them? Hard if the honest men may not rob the thieves once in a way."

"No; give the devil rope, and he will hang himself. Keep thy tongue at home, and thine eyes too, Will."

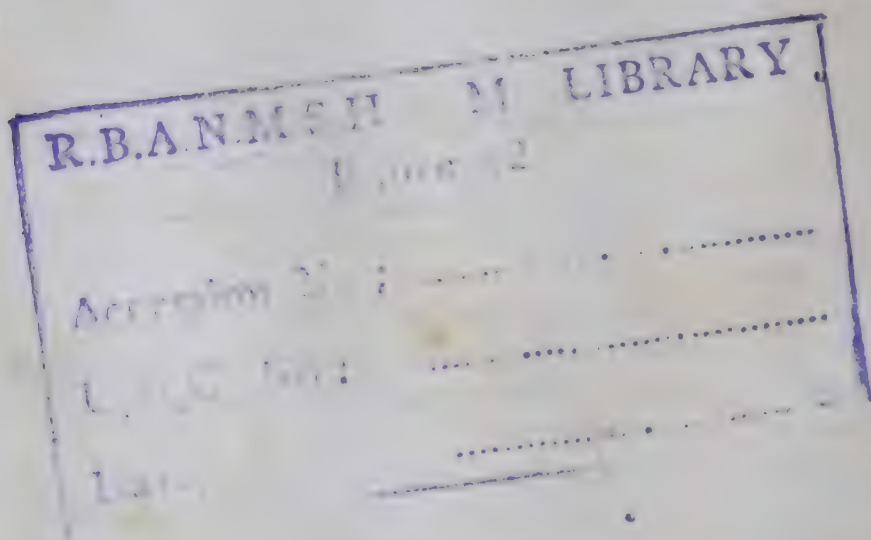
"How then?"

"Let Clovelly beach be watched night and day like any mousehole. No one can land round Harty Point

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with these south-westerns. Stop every fellow who has the ghost of an Irish brogue, come he in or go he out, and send him over to me."

And on they crashed down the Hartland glens, through the oak-scrub and the great crown-ferns; and the baying of the slow-hound and the tantaras of the horn died away farther and fainter toward the blue Atlantic, while the conspirators, with lightened hearts, pricked fast across Bursdon upon their evil errand. But Eustace Leigh had other thoughts and other cares than the safety of his father's two mysterious guests, important as that was in his eyes; for he was one of the many who had drunk in sweet poison (though in his case it could hardly be called sweet) from the magic glances of the Rose of Torridge. He had seen her in the town, and for the first time in his life fallen utterly in love; and now that she had come down close to his father's house, he looked on her as a lamb fallen unawares into the jaws of the greedy wolf, which he felt himself to be. But as yet his suit was in very embryo. He could not even tell whether Rose knew of his love; and he wasted miserable hours in maddening thoughts, and tost all night upon his sleepless bed, and rose next morning fierce and pale, to invent fresh excuses for going over to her uncle's house, and lingering about the fruit which he dared not snatch.



CHAPTER IV

AND what all this while has become of the fair breaker of so many hearts, to whom I have not yet even introduced my readers ?

She was sitting in the little farmhouse beside the mill, buried in the green depths of the Valley of Combe, half-way between Stow and Chapel, sulking as much as her sweet nature would let her, at being thus shut out from all the grand doings at Bideford. So lonely was she, in fact, that though she regarded Eustace Leigh with somewhat of aversion, and (being a good Protestant) with a great deal of suspicion, she could not find it in her heart to avoid a chat with him whenever he came down to the farm and to its mill, which he contrived to do, on I know not what would-be errand, almost every day. Eustace, who knew well that the difference in creed between him and Rose was likely to be the very hardest obstacle in the way of his love, took care to keep his private opinions well in the background; and instead of trying to convert the folk at the mill, daily bought milk or flour from them, and gave it away to the old women at Moorwinstow.

Ever since April last the two Jesuits had been playing at hide-and-seek through the length and breadth of England, and now they were only lying quiet till expected news from Ireland should give them their cue, and a great "rising of the West" should sweep the Queen of England from her throne. One day, as Eustace entered his fathers' private room, after his usual visit to the mill, he could hear voices high in dispute; Parsons, as usual, blustering; Mr. Leigh peevishly deprecating; and Campian, who was really the sweetest-natured of men, trying to pour oil on the troubled waters. Whereat Eustace (for the good of the Catholic cause) stopped outside and listened.

"My excellent sir," said Mr. Leigh, "does not your very presence here show how I am affected toward the holy cause of the Catholic faith? But I cannot in the meanwhile forget that I am an Englishman."

"And what is England?" said Parsons: "Yea, what is

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a country ? An arbitrary division of territory by the princes of this world, who are nought, and come to nought. They are created by the people's will; and what is a king ? —the people who have made him may unmake him."

"My dear sir, recollect that I have sworn allegiance to Queen Elizabeth !"

"Yes, sir, you have, sir; and, as I have shown at large in my writings, you were absolved from that allegiance from the moment that the bull of Pius the Fifth declared her a heretic and excommunicate, and thereby to have forfeited all dominion whatsoever. I tell you, sir, rebellion is now not merely permitted, it is a duty."

"For Heaven's sake, do not talk so, sir ! or I must leave the room," said Mr. Leigh. "Our queen is a very good queen, if Heaven would but grant her repentance, and turn her to the true faith. I have never been troubled about religion, nor any one else that I know of in the West country."

"You forget Mr. Trudgeon of Launceston, father, and poor Father Mayne," interposed Eustace, who had by this time slipped in; and Campian added softly—

"Yes, your West of England also has been honoured by its martyrs, as well as my London by the precious blood of Story."

"What, young malapert ?" cried poor Leigh, facing round upon his son, glad to find any one on whom he might vent his ill-humour; "are you too against me, with a murrain on you ? And pray, what brought Cuthbert Mayne to the gallows, and turned Mr. Trudgeon (he was always a foolish hot-head) out of house and home, but just such treasonable talk as Mr. Parsons must needs hold in my house, to make a beggar of me and my children, as he will before he has done. We should never have had the law of 1571, against bulls, and Agnus Deis, and blessed grains, if the Pope's bull of 1569 had not made them matter of treason, by preventing a poor creature's saving his soul in the true Church without putting his neck into a halter by denying the Queen's authority."

"What, sir ?" almost roared Parsons, "do you dare to speak evil of the edicts of the Vicar of Christ ?"

"I ? No. I didn't. Who says I did ? All I meant was, I am sure—Mr. Campian, you are a reasonable man, speak for me."

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“Mr. Leigh only meant, I am sure, that the Holy Father’s prudent intentions have been so far defeated by the perverseness and invincible misunderstanding of the heretics, that that which was in itself meant for the good of the oppressed English Catholics has been perverted to their harm.”

“And thus, reverend sir,” said Eustace, glad to get into his father’s good graces again, “my father attaches blame, not to the Pope—Heaven forbid!—but to the pravity of his enemies.”

“And it is for this very reason,” said Campian, “that we have brought with us the present merciful explanation of the bull.”

“I’ll tell you what, gentlemen,” said Mr. Leigh, “I don’t think the declaration was needed. After the new law of 1571 was made, it was never put in force till Mayne and Trudgeon made fools of themselves, and that was full six years. There were a few offenders, they say, who were brought up and admonished, and let go; but even that did not happen down here, and need not happen now, unless you put my son here (for you shall never put me, I warrant you) upon some deed which had better be left alone, and so bring us all to shame.”

“Your son, sir, if not openly vowed to God, has, I hope, a due sense of that inward vocation which we have seen in him, and reverences his spiritual fathers too well to listen to the temptations of his earthly father.”

“What, sir, will you teach my son to disobey me?”

“Your son is ours also, sir. This is strange language in one who owes a debt to the Church, which it was charitably fancied he meant to pay in the person of his child.”

These last words touched poor Mr. Leigh in a sore point, and breaking all bounds, he swore roundly at Parsons, who stood foaming with rage.

“A plague upon you, sir, and a black assizes for you, for you will come to the gallows yet! Do you mean to taunt me in my own house with that Hartland land? You had better go back and ask those who sent you where the dispensation to hold the land is, which they promised to get me years ago, and have gone on putting me off, till they have got my money, and my son, and my conscience, and I vow before all the saints, seem now

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to want my head over and above. God help me !"—and the poor man's eyes fairly filled with tears.

Now was Eustace's turn to be roused; for, after all, he was an Englishman and a gentleman; and he said, kindly enough, but firmly—

"Courage, my dearest father. Remember that I am still your son, and not a Jesuit yet; and whether I ever become one, I promise you, will depend mainly on the treatment which you meet with at the hands of these reverend gentlemen, for whom I, as having brought them hither, must consider myself as surety to you."

If a powder-barrel had exploded in the Jesuits' faces, they could not have been more amazed. Campian looked blank at Parsons, and Parsons at Campian; till the stouter-hearted of the two, recovering his breath at last—

"Sir ! do you know, sir, the curse pronounced on those who, after putting their hand to the plough, look back ?"

"All I read is, Father Parsons, that such are not fit for the kingdom of God; of which high honour I have for some time past felt myself unworthy. I have much doubt just now as to my vocation; and in the meanwhile have not forgotten that I am a citizen of a free country." And so saying, he took his father's arm, and walked out.

His last words had hit the Jesuits hard. "A citizen of a free country !"—there was the rub; and they looked at each other in more utter perplexity than ever. At last Parsons spoke :

"There's a woman in the wind. I'll lay my life on it. I saw him blush up crimson yesterday when his mother asked him whether some Rose Salterne or other was still in the neighbourhood."

"A woman ! Well, the spirit may be willing, though the flesh be weak. We will inquire into this. The youth may do us good service as a layman; and if anything should happen to his elder brother (whom the saints protect !) he is heir to some wealth. In the meanwhile, our dear brother Parsons will perhaps see the expediency of altering our tactics somewhat while we are here."

And thereupon a long conversation began between the two, the upshot of which was, that in a day or two (during which time Mr. Leigh and Eustace also made the *amende honorable*, and matters went smoothly enough)

father Campian asked Father Francis, the household chaplain, to allow him, as an especial favour, to hear Eustace's usual confession on the ensuing Friday. Poor Father Francis dared not refuse so great a man; and assented with an inward groan, knowing well that the intent was to worm out some family secrets, whereby his power would be diminished, and the Jesuits' increased. However, Campian heard Eustace's confession; and discovered satisfactorily enough that he was what Campian would have called "in love": he smiled, and set to work next vigorously to find out who the lady might be. At last, when Campian, finding the business not such a very bad one, had asked something about Rose's worldly wealth, Eustace saw a door of escape and sprang at it.

"Even if she be a heretic, she is heiress to one of the wealthiest merchants in Devon."

"Ah!" said Campian thoughtfully. "And she is but eighteen, you say?"

"Only eighteen."

"Ah! well, my son, there is time. She may be reconciled to the Church; or you may change."

"I shall die first."

"Ah, poor lad! Well; she may be reconciled, and her wealth may be of use to the cause of Heaven."

"And it shall be of use. Only absolve me, and let me be at peace. Let me have but her," he cried piteously. "I do not want her wealth,—not I! Let me have but her, and that but for one year, one month, one day!—and all the rest,—money, fame, talents, yea, my life self, hers if it be needed,—are at the service of Holy Church. Ay, I shall glory in showing my devotion by some special sacrifice,—some desperate deed. Prove me now, and see what there is I will not do!"

And so Eustace was absolved; after which Campian added—

"This is indeed well, my son: for there is a thing to be done now, but it may be at the risk of life."

"Prove me!" cried Eustace impatiently.

"Here is a letter which was brought me last night; no matter from whence; you can understand it better than I, and I longed to have shown it to you, but that I feared my son had become——"

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" You feared wrongly, then, my dear Father Campian."

So Campian translated to him the cipher of the letter.

" This to Evan Morgans, gentleman, at Mr. Leigh's house in Moorwinstow, Devonshire. News may be had by one who will go to the shore of Clovelly, any evening after the 25th of November, at dead low tide, and there watch for a boat rowed by one with a red beard, and a Portugal by his speech. If he be asked, ' How many ? ' he will answer, ' Eight hundred and one.' Take his letters and read them. If the shore be watched, let him who comes show a light three times in a safe place under the cliff above the town; below is dangerous landing. Farewell, and expect great things ! "

" I will go," said Eustace; " to-morrow is the 25th, and I know a sure and easy place. Your friend seems to know these shores well."

" Ah ! what is it we do not know ? " said Campian, with a mysterious smile. " And now ? "

" And now, to prove to you how I trust to you, you shall come with me, and see this—the lady of whom I spoke, and judge for yourself whether my fault is not a venial one."

" Ah, my son, have I not absolved you already ? What have I to do with fair faces ? Nevertheless, I will come both to show you that I trust you, and it may be to help towards reclaiming a heretic, and saving a lost soul : who knows ? "

So the two set out together; and, as it was appointed, they had just got to the top of the hill between Chapel and Stow mill, when up the lane came none other than Mistress Rose Salterne herself, in all the glories of a new scarlet hood, from under which her large dark languid eyes gleamed soft lightnings through poor Eustace's heart and marrow.

" There ! " whispered he, trembling from head to foot. " Can you excuse me now ? " And then, as if to escape the scolding which he deserved—

" Will you let me return for a moment ! I will follow you : let me go ! "

Campian saw that it was of no use to say no, and nodded. Eustace darted from his side, and running across a field, met Rose full at the next turn of the road.

She started, and gave a pretty little shriek.

"Mr. Leigh! I thought you had gone forward."

"I came back to speak to you, Rose—Mistress Salterne I mean."

"To me?"

"To you I must speak, tell you all, or die!" And he pressed up close to her. She shrank back somewhat frightened.

"Do not stir; do not go, I implore you! Rose, only hear me!" And fiercely and passionately seizing her by the hand, he poured out the whole story of his love.

There was little, perhaps, of all his words which Rose had not heard many a time before; but there was a quiver in his voice, and a fire in his eye, from which she shrank by instinct.

"Let me go!" she said; "you are too rough, sir!"

"Ay!" he said, seizing now both her hands, "rougher perhaps, than the gay gallants of Bideford, who serenaded you, and write sonnets to you, and send you posies. Rougher, but more loving, Rose! Do not turn away. I shall die if you take your eyes off me! Tell me,—tell me, now here—this moment—before we part—if I may love you!"

"Go away!" she answered, struggling and bursting into tears. "This is too rude. If I am but a merchant's daughter, I am God's child. Remember that I am alone. Leave me; go! or I will call for help!"

"Yes, proud woman! I thought so! Some one of those gay gallants has been beforehand with me. Tell me who—"

But she broke from him, and passed him, and fled down the lane.

And so Eustace Leigh played his move, and lost it.

Poor little Rose, having run nearly to Chapel, stopped for very shame, and walked quietly by the cottage which stood opposite the gate, and then turned up the lane towards Moorwinstow village, whither she was bound. But on second thoughts, she felt herself so "red and flustered," that she was afraid of going into the village, for fear (as she said to herself) of making people talk, and so, turning into a by-path, struck away toward the cliffs, to cool her blushes in the sea-breeze. And then finding a quiet grassy nook beneath the crest of the rock she sat down on the turf, and fell into a great meditation.

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Rose Salterne was a thorough specimen of a West coast maiden, full of passionate impulsive affections, and wild dreamy imaginations, a fit subject, as the North Devon women are still, for all romantic and gentle superstitions. Left early without a mother's care, she had fed her fancy upon the legends and ballads of her native land, till she believed—what did she not believe?—of mermaids and pixies, charms and witches, dreams and omens, and all that world of magic in which most of the countrywomen, and countrymen too, believed firmly enough but twenty years ago.

Poor little Rose ! Had she but had a mother ! But she was to learn her lesson, such as it was, in another school. She was too shy (too proud perhaps) to tell her aunt her mighty troubles; but a counsellor she must have; and after sitting with her head in her hands, for half an hour or more, she arose suddenly, and started off along the cliffs towards Marsland. She would go and see Lucy Passmore, the white witch; Lucy knew everything; Lucy would tell her what to do; perhaps even whom to marry.

The Prophetess, when Rose approached her oracular cave, was seated on a tripod in front of the fire, distilling strong waters out of penny-royal. But no sooner did her distinguished visitor appear at the hatch, than the still was left to take care of itself, and a clean apron and mutch having been slipped on, Lucy welcomed Rose with endless courtesies, and—" Bless my dear soul alive, who ever would have thought to see the Rose of Torridge to my poor little place ! "

Rose sat down : and then ? How to begin was more than she knew, and she stayed silent a full five minutes, looking earnestly at the point of her shoe, till Lucy, who was an adept in such cases, thought it best to proceed to business at once, and save Rose the delicate operation of opening the ball herself; and so in her own way, half fawning, half familiar—

" Well, my dear young lady, and what is it I can do for ye ? For I guess you want a bit of old Lucy's help eh ? Though I'm most mazed to see ye here, surely I should have supposed that pretty face could manage they sort of matters for itself. Eh ? "

Rose, thus bluntly charged, confessed at once, and

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with many blushes and hesitations, made her soon understand that what she wanted was "To have her fortune told."

"Eh? Oh! I see. The pretty face has managed it a little bit too well already, eh? Tu many o'mun, pure fellows? Well, tain't every mayden has her pick and choose, like some I know of, as be blest in love by stars above. So you h'aint made up your mind, then?"

Rose shook her head.

"Well, well," said Lucy, "think over it—think over it, my dear life; and if you did set your mind on any one—why, then—then maybe I might help you to a sight of him."

"A sight of him?"

"His sperrit, dear life, his sperrit only, I mane. I 'udn't have no keeping company in my house, no, not for gowld untowld, I 'udn't; but the sperrit of mun—to see whether mun would be true or not, you'd like to know that, now, 'udn't you, my darling?"

Rose sighed, and stirred the ashes about vehemently.

"I must first know who it is to be. If you could show me that—now——"

"Oh, I can show you that, tu, I can. Be'n there's a way to 't, a sure way; but 'tis mortal cold for the time o' year, you zee."

"But what is it, then?" said Rose, who in her heart had been longing for something of that very kind, and half made up her mind to ask for a charm.

"Why, you'm not afraid to goo into the say by night for a minute, are you? And to-morrow night would serve, too; 'twill be just low tide to midnight."

"If you would come with me, perhaps——"

"I'll come, I'll come, and stand within call, to be sure. Only do ye mind this, dear soul alive, not to goo telling a crumb about mun, noo, not for the world, or yu'll see nought at all, indeed, now. Do ye try my bit of a charm, now; do ye!"

Rose could not resist the temptation; and between them both the charm was agreed on, and the next night fixed for its trial, on the payment of certain current coins of the realm (for Lucy, of course, must live by her trade); and slipping a sixpence into the dame's hand as earnest, Rose went away home, and got there in safety.

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But in the meanwhile, at the very hour that Eustace had been prosecuting his suit in the lane at Moorwinstow, a very different scene was being enacted in Mrs. Leigh's room at Burrough.

For the night before, Amyas, as he was going to bed, heard his brother Frank in the next room tune his lute, and then begin to sing. And both their windows being open, and only a thin partition between the chambers, Amyas's admiring ears came in for every word of a canzonet, sung in that delicate and mellow tenor voice for which Frank was famed among all fair ladies.

The simple sailor sighed, and longed that he could write neat verses, and sing them so sweetly. How he would besiege the ear of Rose Salterne with amorous ditties ! But still, he could not be everything; and if he had the bone and muscle of the family, it was but fair that Frank should have the brains and voice. Whereon he shouted through the wall, "Good-night, old song-thrush; I suppose I need not pay the musicians."

"What, awake?" answered Frank. "Come in here, and lull me to sleep with a sea-song."

So Amyas went in, and found Frank laid on the outside of his bed not yet undrest.

"I am a bad sleeper," said he; "I spend more time, I fear, in burning the midnight oil than prudent men should. Come and be my jongleur, my minne-singer, and tell me about Andes, and cannibals, and the ice-regions, and the fire-regions, and the paradises of the West."

So Amyas sat down, and told: but somehow, every story which he tried to tell came round, by crooked paths, yet sure, to none other point than Rose Salterne, and how he thought of her here, and thought of her there, and how he wondered what she would say if she had seen him in this adventure, and how he longed to have had her with him to show her that glorious sight, till Frank let him have his own way, and then out came the whole story of the simple fellow's daily and hourly devotion to her, through those three long years of world-wide wanderings.

The next morning, according to his wont, Amyas went into his mother's room, whom he was sure to find up and at her prayers; for he liked to say his prayers, too, by her side, as he used to do when he was a little boy. It seemed

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so homelike, he said, after three years' knocking up and down in no-man's-land. But coming gently to the door, for fear of disturbing her, and entering unperceived, beheld a sight which stopped him short.

Mrs. Leigh was sitting in her chair, with her face bowed fondly down upon the head of his brother Frank, who knelt before her, his face buried in her lap. Amyas could see that his whole form was quivering with stifled emotion. Their mother was just finishing the last words of a well-known text—"for my sake, and the Gospel's, shall receive a hundredfold in this present life, fathers, and mothers, and brothers, and sisters."

"But not a wife!" interrupted Frank, with a voice stifled with sobs; "that was too precious a gift for even Him to promise to those who gave up a first love for His sake!"

"And yet," said he, after a moment's silence, "has He not heaped me with blessings enough already, that I must repine and rage at His refusing me one more, even though that one be—No, mother! I am your son, and God's; and you shall know it, even though Amyas never does!" And he looked up with his clear blue eyes and white forehead; and his face was as the face of an angel.

Both of them saw that Amyas was present, and started and blushed. His mother motioned him away with her eyes, and he went quietly out, as one stunned. Why had his name been mentioned?

Love, cunning love, told him all at once. His brother was his rival. And he had been telling him all his love last night. What a stupid brute he was! How it must have made poor Frank wince! And then Frank had listened so kindly; even bid him God-speed in his suit. What a gentleman old Frank was, to be sure! He strode and tramped up and down the shell-paved garden walks for a full half-hour, till Frank's voice (as cheerful as ever, though he more than suspected all) called him.

Amyas, whether by dint of holding his head straight, or by higher means, had got the thoughts of the said head straight enough by this time; and in he came, and fell to upon the broiled fish and strong ale with a sort of fury.

"My dear Amyas, you will really heat your blood with

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all that strong ale ! Remember, those who drink beer. think beer."

"Then they think right good thoughts, mother. And in the meanwhile, those who drink water, think water. Eh, old Frank ! and here's your health."

"And clouds are water," said his mother, somewhat reassured by his genuine good-humour; "and so are rainbows; and clouds are angels' thrones, and rainbows the sign of God's peace on earth."

Amyas understood the hint, and laughed. "Then I'll pledge Frank out of the next ditch, if it please you and him. But first—I say—he must hearken to a parable; a manner mystery, miracle play, I have got in my head, like what they have at Easter, to the town-hall. Now then, hearken madam, and I and Frank will act." And up rose Amyas, and shoved back his chair, and put on a solemn face.

Mrs. Leigh looked up, trembling; and Frank, he scarce knew why, rose.

"No; you pitch again. You are King David, and sit still upon your throne. David was a great singer, you know, and a player on the viols; and ruddy, too, and of a fair countenance; so that will fit. Now, then, mother, don't look so frightened. I am not going to play Goliath, for all my cubits; I am to present Nathan the prophet. Now, David, hearken, for I have a message unto thee, O King !

"There were two men in one city, one rich, and the other poor : and the rich man had many flocks and herds, and all the fine ladies in Whitehall to court if he liked; and the poor man had nothing but——"

And in spite of his broad honest smile, Amyas's deep voice began to tremble and choke.

Frank sprang up and burst into tears :—"Oh, Amyas, my brother, my brother ! stop ! I cannot endure this. Oh God ! was it not enough to have entangled myself in this fatal fancy, but over and above, I must meet the shame of my brother's discovering it ?"

"What shame, then, I'd like to know ?" said Amyas, recovering himself. "Look here, brother Frank ! I've thought it all over in the garden; and I was an ass and a braggart for talking to you as I did last night. Of course you love her ! Everybody must; and I was a

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fool for not recollecting that; and if you love her, your taste and mine agree, and what can be better? I think you are a sensible fellow for loving her, and you think me one. And as for who has her, why, you're the eldest; and first come first served is the rule, and best to keep to it. So I'll go and join the army in Ireland, and get it out of my head, for cannon balls fright away love as well as poverty does; and that's all I've got to say." Wherewith Amyas sat down, and returned to the beer; while Mrs. Leigh wept tears of joy.

"My children, my children, which of you shall I love best? Which of you is the more noble? I thanked God this morning for having given me one such son; but to have found that I possess two!" And Mrs. Leigh laid her head on the table, and buried her face in her hands, while the generous battle went on.

"But, dearest Amyas!——"

"But, Frank! if you don't hold your tongue, I must go forth. It was quite trouble enough to make up one's mind, without having you afterwards trying to unmake it again."

"Amyas! if you give her up to me, God do so to me, and more also, if I do not hereby give her up to you!"

"He had done it already—this morning!" said Mrs. Leigh, looking up through her tears. "He renounced her for ever on his knees before me! only he is too noble to tell you so."

"The more reason I should copy him," said Amyas, setting his lips, and trying to look desperately determined, and then suddenly jumping up, he leaped upon Frank, and throwing his arms round his neck, sobbed out, "There, there, now! For God's sake, let us forget all, and think about our mother, and the old house, and how we may win her honour before we die! and that will be enough to keep our hands full, without fretting about this woman and that."

And so the battle ended; and Frank went to his books, while Amyas, who must needs be doing, if he was not to dream, started off to the dockyard to potter about a new ship of Sir Richard's, and forget his woes in the capacity of Sir Oracle among the sailors. And so he had played his move for Rose, even as Eustace had, and lost her; but not as Eustace had.

CHAPTER V

THE next morning Amyas Leigh was not to be found. Not that he had gone out to drown himself in despair, or even to bemoan himself "down by the Torridge side." He had simply ridden off, Frank found, to Sir Richard Grenville at Stow: his mother at once divined the truth, that he was gone to try for a post in the Irish army, and sent off Frank after him to bring him home again, and make him at least reconsider himself.

So Frank took horse and rode thereon ten miles or more: and then, as there were no inns on the road in those days, or indeed in these, and he had some ten miles more of hilly road before him, he turned down the hill towards Clovelly Court, to obtain, after the hospitable humane fashion of those days, good entertainment for man and horse from Mr. Cary the squire.

And when he walked self-invited, in the long dark wainscoted hall of the Court, the first object he beheld was the mighty form of Amyas, who, seated at the long table, was alternately burying his face in a pasty, and the pasty in his face, his sorrows having, as it seemed, only sharpened his appetite, while young Will Cary, kneeling on the opposite bench, with his elbows on the table, was in that graceful attitude laying down the law fiercely to him in a low voice.

"Hillo! lad," cried Amyas; "come hither and deliver me out of the hands of this fire-eater, who I verily believe will kill me, if I do not let him kill some one else."

"Ah! Mr. Frank," said Will Cary, who, like all other young gentlemen of these parts, held Frank in high honour, "welcome here: I was just longing for you, too; I wanted your advice on half a dozen matters. Sit down, and eat. There is the ale."

"None so early, thank you."

"Well, I was telling Amyas, that Tom Coffin, of Portledge—I will stand him no longer."

"Let him be, then," said Amyas; "he could stand very well by himself, when I saw him last."

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"Plague on you, hold your tongue ! Has he any right to look at me as he does, whenever I pass him ? "

"That depends on how he looks; a cat may look at a king, provided she don't take him for a mouse."

"Oh, I know how he looks, and what he means, too, and he shall stop, or I will stop him. And the other day, when I spoke of Rose Salterne, he burst out laughing in my face; and is not that a fair quarrel ? "

"My dear knight of the burning pestle, I have a plan, a device, a disentanglement, according to most approved rules of chivalry. Let us fix a day, and summon by tuck of drum all young gentlemen under the age of thirty dwelling within fifteen miles of the habitation of that peerless Oriana."

"And all 'prentice boys too," cried Amyas out of the pasty.

"And all 'prentice boys. The bold lads shall fight first, with good quarter-staves, in Bideford Market, till all heads are broken; and the head which is not broken, let the back belonging to it pay the penalty of the noble member's cowardice."

"Really," said Cary, "this is too bad."

"So is, pardon me, your fighting Mr. Coffin with anything longer than a bodkin."

"Bodkins are too short for such fierce Bobadils," Amyas said; "they would close in so near, that we should have them falling to fisticuffs after the first bout."

"Then let them fight with squirts across the market-place; for by heaven and the Queen's laws, they shall fight with nothing else."

"My dear Mr. Cary," went on Frank, suddenly changing his bantering tone to one of the most winning sweetness; "do not fancy that I cannot feel for you; or that I, as well as you, have not known the stings of love and the bitterer stings of jealousy. But oh, Mr. Cary, does it not seem to you an awful thing to waste selfishly upon your own quarrel that divine wrath, which, as Plato says, is the very root of all virtues, and which has been given you, like all else which you have, that you may spend it in the service of her whom all bad souls fear, and all virtuous souls adore, —our peerless Queen ? "

"Well," said Will penitently, "you are a great scholar,

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Mr. Frank, and you speak like one; but gentlemen must fight sometimes, or where would be their honour ? ”

“ I speak,” said Frank, a little proudly, “ not merely as a scholar, but as a gentleman, and one who has fought ere now, and to whom it has happened, Mr. Cary, to kill his man (on whose soul may God have mercy); but it is my pride to remember that I have never yet fought in my own quarrel, and my trust in God that I never shall.”

“ But what shall I do ? ” said Will, “ for to the market to-morrow I will go, if it were choke-full of Coffins, and a ghost in each coffin of the lot.”

“ Leave the matter to me,” said Amyas. “ I have my device, as well as scholar Frank here; and if there be, as I suppose there must be, a quarrel in the market to-morrow, see if I do not——”

“ Well, you are two good fellows,” said Will. “ Let us have another tankard in.”

“ And drink the health of Mr. Coffin, and all gallant lads of the North ” said Frank; “ and now to my business. I have to take this runaway youth here home to his mother; and if he will not go quietly, I have orders to carry him across my saddle.”

“ I hope your nag has a strong back, then,” said Amyas; “ but I must go on and see Sir Richard, Frank. It is all very well to jest as we have been doing, but my mind is made up.”

“ Stop,” said Cary. “ You must stay here to-night; first, for good fellowship’s sake; and next, because I want the advice of our Phoenix here, our oracle, our paragon. There, Mr. Frank, can you construe that for me ? Speak low, though, gentlemen both; there comes my father; you had better give me the letter again. Well, father, whence this morning ? ”

“ Eh, company here ? Young men, you are always welcome, and such as you. Would there were more of your sort in these dirty times. Half-past twelve, and dinner not served ? What, Master Amyas, spoiling your appetite with strong ale ? Better have tried sack, lad; have some now with me.”

And the worthy old gentleman settled himself on a great bench inside the chimney.

“ Come, Master Amyas, a pint of white wine and sugar, and a bit of a shoeing-horn to it ere we dine. Some

pickled prawns, now, or a rasher off the coals, to whet you ? ”

“ Thank you,” quoth Amyas ; “ but I have drunk a mort of outlandish liquors, better and worse, in the last three years, and yet never found aught to come up to good ale, which needs neither shoeing-horn before nor after, but takes care of itself, and of all honest stomachs too, I think.”

“ You speak like a book, boy,” said old Cary ; “ and after all, what a plague comes of these new-fangled hot wines, and aqua vitæ, which have come in since the wars, but maddening of the brains, and fever of the blood ? ”

“ I fear we have not seen the end of that yet,” said Frank. “ My friends write me from the Netherlands that our men are falling into a swinish trick of swilling like the Hollanders. Heaven grant that they may not bring home the fashion with them.”

“ A man must drink, they say, or die of the ague, in those vile swamps,” said Amyas. “ When they get home here, they will not need it.”

“ Heaven grant it,” said Frank ; “ I should be sorry to see Devonshire a drunken county ; and there are many of our men out there with Mr. Champernoun.”

“ Ah,” said Cary, “ there, as in Ireland, we are proving her Majesty’s saying true, that Devonshire is her right hand, and the young children thereof like the arrows in the hand of the giant.”

“ They may well be,” said his son, “ when some of them are giants themselves, like my tall schoolfellow opposite.”

“ He will be up and doing again presently, I’ll warrant him,” said old Cary.

“ And that I shall,” quoth Amyas. “ I have been devising brave deeds ; and see in the distance enchanters to be bound, dragons choked, empires conquered, though not in Holland.”

“ You do ? ” asked Will a little sharply ; for he had had a half suspicion that more was meant than met the ear.

“ Yes,” said Amyas, turning off his jest again, “ I go to what Raleigh calls the Land of the Nymphs. Another month, I hope, will see me abroad in Ireland.”

“ Abroad ? Call it rather at home,” said old Cary ;

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"for it is full of Devon men from end to end, and you will be among friends all day long. But here come the knaves, and I hear the cook knock to dinner."

After a madrigal or two, and an Italian song of Master Frank's, all which went sweetly enough, the ladies rose and went. Whereon Will Cary, drawing his chair close to Frank's, put quietly into his hand a dirty letter.

"This was the letter left for me," whispered he, "by a country fellow this morning. Look at it and tell me what I am to do."

Whereon Frank opened, and read—

"Mister Cary, be you wary
By deer park end to-night.
Yf Irish ffoxe com out of rocks
Grip and hold him tight."

"I would have showed it my father," said Will, "but——"

"I verily believe it to be a blind. See now, this is the handwriting of a man who has been trying to write vilely, and yet cannot. Look at that B, and that G; their shapes never were begotten in a hedge-school. And what is more, this is no Devon man's handiwork. We say 'to' and not 'by,' Will, eh? in the West country?"

"Of course."

"And 'mun,' instead of 'him'?"

"True, O Daniel! But am I to do nothing therefore?"

"On that matter I am no judge. Let us ask much-enduring Ulysses here; perhaps he has not sailed round the world without bringing home a device or two."

Amyas pondered a while, thrusting his hands into his long curls; and then—

"Will, my lad, have you been watching at the Deer Park End of late?"

"Never."

"Where then?"

"At the town-beach."

"Where else?"

"At the town-head."

"Where else?"

"Why, the fellow is turned lawyer! Above Freshwater."

"Where is Freshwater?"

"Why, where the waterfall comes over the cliff, half a

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mile from the town. There is a path there up into the forest."

"I know. I'll watch there to-night. Do you keep all your old haunts safe, of course, and send a couple of stout knaves to the mill, to watch the beach at the Deer Park End, on the chance; for your poet may be a true man, after all. But my heart's faith is, that this comes just to draw you off from some old beat of yours, upon a wild goose chase. If they shoot the miller by mistake, I suppose it don't much matter?"

"Marry, no. But why are you so ready to watch Freshwater to-night, Master Amyas?" chimed in old Mr. Cary.

"Because, sir, those who come, if they come, will never land at Mouthmill; if they are strangers, they dare not; and if they are bay's-men, they are too wise, as long as the westerly swell sets in. As for landing at the town, that would be too great a risk; but Freshwater is as lonely as the Bermudas; and they can beach a boat up under the cliff at all tides, and in all weathers, except north and nor'-west. I have done it many a time, when I was a boy."

"And give us the fruit of your experience now in your old age, eh? Well, you have a grey head on green shoulders, my lad; and I verily believe you are right. Who will you take with you to watch?"

"Sir," said Frank, "I will go with my brother: and that will be enough."

"Enough? He is big enough, and you brave enough, for ten; but still, the more the merrier."

"But the fewer, the better fare. If I might ask a first and last favour, worshipful sir," said Frank very earnestly, "you would grant me two things: that you would let none go to Freshwater but me and my brother; and that whatsoever we shall bring you back shall be kept as secret as the commonweal and your loyalty shall permit."

Few more words were exchanged, till the two brothers were safe outside the house; and then—

"Amyas," said Frank, "that was a Devon man's handiwork, nevertheless; it was Eustace's handwriting."

"Impossible!"

"No, lad. I have been secretary to a prince, and learnt to interpret cipher, and to watch every pen-stroke; and,

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young as I am, I think that I am not easily deceived. Would God I were! Come on, lad; and strike no man hastily, lest thou cut off thine own flesh."

So forth the two went, along the park to the eastward, to a point where two glens meet and pour their streamlets over a cascade some hundred feet in height into the sea below. By the side of this waterfall a narrow path climbs upward from the beach; and here it was that the two brothers expected to meet the messenger.

Frank insisted on taking his station below Amyas. He said he was the elder brother, and the post of honour was his right. So Amyas took his station under a high marl bank, and, bedded in luxuriant crown-ferns, kept his eye steadily on Frank, who sat down on a little knoll of rock (where is now a cliff-edge) which parts the path and the dark chasm down which the stream rushes to its final leap over the cliff.

There Amyas sat a full half-hour, and glanced at whiles from Frank to look upon the scene around. At last he heard a rustle of the fallen leaves; he shrank closer and closer into the darkness of the bank. Then swift light steps—not down the path, from above, but upward, from below; his heart beat quick and loud. And in another half-minute a man came in sight, within three yards of Frank's hiding-place.

Frank sprang out instantly. Amyas saw his bright blade glance in the clear October moonlight.

"Stand, in the Queen's name!"

The man drew a pistol from under his cloak, and fired full in his face. Had it happened in these days of detonators, Frank's chance had been small; but to get a ponderous wheel-lock under weigh was a longer business, and before the fizzing of the flint had ceased, Frank had struck up the pistol with his rapier, and it exploded harmlessly over his head. The man instantly dashed the weapon in his face and closed.

The blow, luckily, did not take effect on that delicate forehead, but struck him on the shoulder: nevertheless, Frank staggered and lost his guard, and before he could recover himself, Amyas saw a dagger gleam, and one, two, three blows fiercely repeated.

Mad with fury, he was with them in an instant. They were scuffling together so closely in the shade that he was

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afraid to use his sword point; but with the hilt he dealt a single blow full on the ruffian's cheek. It was enough; with a hideous shriek, the fellow rolled over at his feet, and Amyas set his foot on him, in act to run him through.

"Stop! stay!" almost screamed Frank; "it is Eustace! our cousin Eustace!" and he leant against a tree.

Amyas sprang towards him: but Frank waved him off.

"It is nothing—a scratch. He has papers: I am sure of it. Take them; and for God's sake let him go!"

"Villain! give me your papers!" cried Amyas, setting his foot once more on the writhing Eustace, whose jaw was broken across.

Eustace was usually no craven: but he was cowed. Between agony and shame, he had no heart to resist. He shuddered; pulled a packet from his bosom, and threw it from him, murmuring "I have not given it."

"Swear to me that these are all the papers which you have in cipher or out of cipher. Swear on your soul, or you die!"

Eustace swore.

"Tell me, who are your accomplices?"

"Never!" said Eustace. "Cruel! have you not degraded me enough already?" and the wretched young man burst into tears, and hid his bleeding face in his hands.

One hint of honour made Amyas as gentle as a lamb. He lifted Eustace up, and bade him run for his life.

"I am to owe my life, then, to you?"

"Not in the least; only to your being a Leigh. Go, or it will be worse for you!" And Eustace went; while Amyas, catching up the precious packet, hurried to Frank. He had fainted already, and his brother had to carry him as far as the park before he could find any of the other watchers. The blind, as far as they were concerned, was complete. They had heard and seen nothing. Whoever had brought the packet had landed they knew not where; and so all returned to the Court, carrying Frank, who recovered gradually, having rather bruises than wounds; for his foe had struck wildly, and with a trembling hand.

Half an hour after, Amyas, Mr. Cary, and his son Will were in deep consultation over the following epistle, the only paper in the packet which was not in cipher:—

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“✠ DEAR BROTHER N. *S. in Ch^o et Ecclesia.*

“ This is to inform you and the friends of the cause, that S. Josephus has landed in Smerwick, with eight hundred valiant Crusaders, burning with holy zeal to imitate last year's martyrs of Carrigfolium, and to expiate their offences (which I fear may have been many) by the propagation of our most holy faith. I have purified the fort (which they are strenuously rebuilding) with prayer and holy water, from the stain of heretical footsteps, and consecrated it afresh to the service of Heaven, as the first-fruits of the isle of saints; and having displayed the consecrated banner to the adoration of the faithful, have returned to Earl Desmond, that I may establish his faith, weak as yet, by reason of the allurements of this world. If you can do anything, do it quickly, for a great door and effectual is opened, and there are many adversaries. But be swift, for so do the poor lambs of the Church tremble at the fury of the heretics, that a hundred will flee before one Englishman. And indeed, were it for that divine charity towards the Church (which covers the multitude of sins) with which they are resplendent, neither they nor their country would be, by the carnal judgment, counted worthy of so great labour in their behalf. For they themselves are given much to lying, theft, and drunkenness, vain babbling, and profane dancing and singing; while their land (by reason of the tyranny of their chieftains, and the continual wars and plunderings among their tribes, which leave them weak and divided, an easy prey to the myrmidons of the excommunicate and usurping Englishwoman) lies utterly waste with fire, and defaced with corpses of the starved and slain. But what are these things, while the holy virtue of Catholic obedience still flourishes in their hearts? The Church cares not for the conservation of body and goods, but of immortal souls.

“ Your loving brother,
“ N. S.”

“ Sir Richard must know of this before daybreak,” cried old Cary. “ Eight hundred men landed! We must call out the Posse Comitatus, and sail with them bodily. I will go myself, old as I am. Spaniards in Ireland? not a dog of them must go home again.”

"Not a dog of them," answered Will; "but where is Mr. Winter and his squadron!"

"Safe in Milford Haven; a messenger must be sent to him too."

"I'll go," said Amyas: "but Mr. Cary is right. Sir Richard must know all first."

"And we must have those Jesuits."

"What? Mr. Evans and Mr. Morgans? God help us—they are at my uncle's! Consider the honour of our family!"

"Judge for yourself, my dear boy," said old Mr. Cary gently: "would it not be rank treason to let these foxes escape, while we have this damning proof against them?"

"I will go myself, then."

"Why not? You may keep all straight, and Will shall go with you. Call a groom, Will, and get your horse saddled, and my Yorkshire grey; he will make better play with this big fellow on his back, than the little pony astride of which Mr. Leigh came walking in (as I hear) this morning. As for Frank, the ladies will see to him well enough, and glad enough, too, to have so fine a bird in their cage for a week or two."

"And my mother?"

"We'll send to her to-morrow by daybreak. Come, a stirrup cup to start with, hot and hot. Now, boots, cloaks, words, a deep pull and a warm one, and away!"

And the jolly old man bustled them out of the house and into their saddles, under the broad bright winter's moon.

"You must make your pace, lads, or the moon will be down before you are over the moors." And so away they went.

At length Amyas pulled up suddenly.

"Did you not hear a horse's step on our left?"

"On our left—coming up from Welsford moor? Impossible at this time of night. It must have been a stag, or maybe only an old cow."

"It was the ring of iron, friend. Let us stand and watch."

"If any of Eustace's party are trying to get home from Freshwater, they might save a couple of miles by coming across Welsford, instead of going by the main track, as we have done." So said Amyas, who, though (luckily

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for him) no "genius," was cunning as a fox in all matters of tactic and practice.

"If any of his party are mad, they'll try it, and be stogged till the day of judgment. There are bogs in the bottom twenty feet deep. Plague on the fellow, whoever he is, he has dodged us ! Look there !"

It was too true. The unknown horseman had evidently dismounted below, and led his horse up on the other side of a long furze-dike; till coming to the point where it turned away again from his intended course, he appeared against the sky, in the act of leading his nag over a gap.

"Ride like the wind !" and both youths galloped across furze and heather at him ; but ere they were within a hundred yards of him, he had leapt again on his horse, and was away far ahead.

"Now, then, straight to Chapel, and stop the foxes' earth ? Or through the King's Park to Stow, and get out Sir Richard's hounds, hue and cry, and Queen's warrant in proper form ?"

"Let us see Sir Richard first; and whatsoever he decides about my uncle, I will endure as a loyal subject must."

Down through warm woods, all fragrant with dying autumn flowers, leaving far above the keen Atlantic breeze, into one of those delicious Western Coombes, and so past the mill, and the little knot of flower-clad cottages. In the window of one of them a light was still burning. The two young men knew well whose window that was, and both hearts beat fast; for Rose Salterne 'slept, or rather seemed to wake, in that chamber.

"We shall be at Stow gate in five minutes," said Cary, looking back and down longingly as his horse climbed the opposite hill; but a turn of the zigzag road hid the cottage, and the next thought was, how to effect an entrance into Stow at three in the morning without being eaten by the ban-dogs, who were already howling and growling at the sound of the horse-hoofs.

However, they got safely in, after much knocking and calling through the postern-gate in the high west wall, into the mansion.

Sir Richard, in his long gown, was soon downstairs in the hall; the letter read, and the story told. In half an hour they were down and up across the valley again, under the

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few low ashes clift flat by the sea-breeze which stood round the lonely gate of Chapel.

"Mr. Cary, there is a back path across the downs to Marsland; go and guard that." Cary rode off; and Sir Richard, as he knocked loudly at the gate—

"Mr. Leigh, you see that I have consulted your honour, and that of your poor uncle, by adventuring thus alone. What will you have me do now, which may not be unfit for me and you?"

"Oh, sir!" said Amyas, with tears in his honest eyes, "you have shown yourself once more what you always have been—my dear and beloved master on earth, not second even to my admiral, Sir Francis Drake."

"Or the Queen, I hope," said Grenvile, smiling; "but what will you do?"

"My wretched cousin, sir, may not have returned-- and if I might watch for him on the main road—unless you want me with you."

"Richard Grenvile can walk alone, lad. But what will you do with your cousin?"

"Send him out of the country, never to return; or, if he refuses, run him through on the spot."

"Go, lad." And as he spoke, a sleepy voice asked inside the gate, "Who was there?"

"Sir Richard Grenvile. Open in the Queen's name!"

"Sir Richard? He is in bed, and he hanged to you. No honest folk come at this hour of night."

"Amyas!" shouted Sir Richard. Amyas rode back.

"Burst that gate for me, while I hold your horse."

Amyas leaped down, took up a rock from the roadside, such as Homer's heroes used to send at each other's heads, and in an instant the door was flat on the ground, and the serving-man on his back inside, while Sir Richard, quietly entering over it, told the fellow to get up and hold his horse for him (which the clod, who knew well enough that terrible voice, did without further murmurs), and then strode straight to the front door. It was already opened. The household had been up and about all along, for the noise at the entry had aroused them.

Sir Richard knocked, however, at the open door; and, to his astonishment, his knock was answered by Mr. Leigh himself, fully dressed, and candle in hand.

"Sir Richard Grenvile! What, sir! is this neighbourly,

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not to say gentle, to break into my house in the dead of night ? ”

“ I broke your outer door, sir, because I was refused entrance when I asked in the Queen’s name. I knocked at your inner one, as I should have knocked at the poorest cottager’s in the parish, because I found it open. You have two Jesuits here, sir ! and here is the Queen’s warrant for apprehending them. I have signed it with my own hand, and, moreover, serve it now, with my own hand, in order to save you scandal—and, it may be, worse. I must have these men, Mr. Leigh.”

“ My dear Sir Richard !——”

“ I must have them, or I must search the house ; and you would not put either yourself or me to so shameful a necessity ? ”

“ My dear Sir Richard !——”

“ Must I, then, ask you to stand back from your own doorway, my dear sir ? ” said Grenville. And then changing his voice to that fearful lion’s roar, for which he was famous, and which it seemed impossible that lips so delicate could utter, he thundered, “ Knaves, behind there ! Back ! ”

This was spoken to half a dozen grooms and serving-men, who, well armed, were clustered in the passage.

“ What ? swords out, you sons of cliff rabbits ? ” And in a moment, Sir Richard’s long blade flashed out, and putting Mr. Leigh gently aside, as if he had been a child, he walked up to the party, who vanished right and left, having expected a cur dog, in the shape of a parish constable, and come upon a lion instead.

“ And now, my dear Mr. Leigh,” said Sir Richard, as blandly as ever, “ where are my men ? The night is cold and you as well as I need to be in our beds.”

“ The men, Sir Richard—the Jesuits—they are not here indeed.”

“ Not here, sir ? ”

“ On the word of a gentleman, they left my house an hour ago. Believe me, sir, they did. I will swear to you if you need.”

“ I believe Mr. Leigh of Chapel’s word without oath. Whither are they gone ? ”

“ Nay, sir—how can I tell ? They are—they are, as may say, fled, sir ; escaped.”

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"With your connivance; at least with your son's. Where are they gone?"

"As I live, I do not know."

"Mr. Leigh—is this possible? Can you add untruth to that treason from the punishment of which I am trying to shield you?"

Poor Mr. Leigh burst into tears.

"O my God! my God! is it come to this? Over and above having the fear and anxiety of keeping these black rascals in my house, and having to stop their villainous mouths every minute, for fear they should hang me and themselves, I am to be called a traitor and a liar in my old age, and that, too, by Richard Grenville!" And the poor old man sank into a chair, and covered his face with his hands.

Sir Richard went round and called to Cary to come to him.

"The birds are flown, Will," whispered he. "There is but one chance for us, and that is Marsland Mouth. If they are trying to take boat there, you may be yet in time. If they are gone inland we can do nothing till we raise the hue and cry to-morrow."

And Will galloped off over the downs towards Marsland, while Sir Richard ceremoniously walked in again, and professed himself ready and happy to have the honour of an audience in Mr. Leigh's private chamber. And as we now pretty well already what was to be discussed therein, we had better go over to Marsland Mouth, and, if possible, arrive there before Will Cary: seeing that he arrived hot and swearing, half an hour too late.

CHAPTER VI

“Far, far from hence
The Adriatic breaks in a warm bay
Among the green Illyrian hills, and there
The sunshine in the happy glens is fair,
And by the sea and in the brakes
The grass is cool, the sea-side air
Buoyant and fresh, the mountain flowers
More virginal and sweet than ours.”

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

AND even such are those delightful glens which cut the high table-land of the confines of Devon and Cornwall, and opening each through its gorge of down and rock, towards the boundless Western Ocean. Each is like the other, and each is like no other English scenery. Each has its black field of jagged shark's-tooth rock which paves the cove from side to side, streaked with here and there a pink line of shell sand, and laced with white foam from the eternal surge, stretching in parallel lines out to the westward, in strata set upright on edge, or tilted towards each other at strange angles by primeval earthquakes;—such is the “Mouth”—as those coves are called.

In only one of these “Mouths” is a landing for boats, made possible by a long sea-wall of rock, which protects it from the rollers of the Atlantic; and that mouth is Marsland, the abode of the White Witch, Lucy Passmore; whither, as Sir Richard Grenville rightly judged, the Jesuits were gone. But before the Jesuits came two other persons were standing on that lonely beach under the bright October moon, namely, Rose Salterne and the White Witch herself; for Rose, fevered with curiosity and superstition, and allured by the very wildness and possible danger of the spell, had kept her appointment; and, a few minutes before midnight, stood on the grey shingle beach with her counsellor.

“You be safe enough here to-night, Miss. My old man is snoring sound abed, and there's no other soul ever sets foot here o' nights, except it be the mermaids now and then. I'll just sit in the boat, dear, and watch mur-

while you go down to the say; for you must be all alone to yourself, you know, or you'll see nothing. There's the looking-glass; now go, and dip your head three times, and mind you don't look to land or sea before you've said the words, and looked upon the glass. Now, be quick, it's just upon midnight."

And she coiled herself up in the boat, while Rose went faltering down the strip of sand, some twenty yards farther, and there slipping off her clothes, stood shivering and trembling for a moment before she entered the sea.

If she performed the rite duly, nothing would harm her: but she could hear the beating of her own heart, as she stepped, mirror in hand, into the cold water, waded hastily, as far as she dare, and then stopped aghast.

A ring of flame was round her waist; every limb was bathed in lambent light; all the multitudinous life of the autumn sea, stirred by her approach, had flashed suddenly into glory. She could see every shell which crawled on the white sand at her feet, every rock-fish which played in and out of the crannies, and stared at her with its broad bright eyes; while the great palmate seaweeds which waved along the chasm, half-seen in the glimmering water, seemed to beckon her down with long brown hands to a grave amid their chilly bowers. She turned to flee: but she had gone too far now to retreat; hastily dipping her head three times, she hurried out to the sea-marge, and looking through her dripping locks at the magic mirror, pronounced the incantation—

"A maiden pure, here I stand,
Neither on sea nor yet on land;
Angels watch me on either hand.
If you be landsman, come down the strand;
If you be sailor, come up the sand;
If you be angel, come from the sky,
Look in my glass, and pass me by;
Look in my glass, and go from the shore;
Leave me, but love me for evermore."

The incantation was hardly finished; her eyes were straining into the mirror, where, as may be supposed, nothing appeared but the sparkle of the drops from her own tresses, when she heard rattling down the pebbles the hasty feet of men and horses.

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She darted into a cavern of the high rock, and hastily dressed herself : the steps held right on to the boat. Peeping out, half-dead with terror, she saw there four men, two of whom had just leaped from their horses, and turning them adrift, began to help the other two in running the boat down.

Whereon out of the stern-sheets, arose, like an angry ghost, the portly figure of Lucy Passmore, and shrieked in shrillest treble—

“ Eh ! ye villains, ye roogs, what do ye want staling poor folks’ boats by night like this ? ”

The whole party recoiled in terror, and one turned to run up the beach, shouting at the top of his voice, “ ’Tis a marmaiden—a marmaiden asleep in Willie Passmore’s boat ! ”

“ I wish it were any sich good luck,” she could hear Will say; “ ’tis my wife, oh dear ! ” and he cowered down, expecting the hearty cuff which he received duly, as the White Witch, leaping out of the boat, dared any man to touch it, and thundered to her husband to go home to bed.

The wily dame, as Rose well guessed, was keeping up this delay chiefly to gain time for her pupil : but she had also more solid reasons for making the fight as hard as possible; for she, as well as Rose, had already discerned in the ungainly figure of one of the party the same suspicious Welsh gentleman whose calling she had divined long ago; and she was so loyal a subject as to hold in extreme horror her husband’s meddling with such “ Popish skulkers ” (as she called the whole party roundly to their face)—unless on consideration of a very handsome sum of money.

“ Lucy, Lucy ! ” shrieked her husband, in shrillest Devon falsetto, “ be you mazed ? Be you mazed, lass ! They promised me two gold nobles before I’d lend them the boat.”

“ Tu ? ” shrieked the matron, in a tone of ineffable scorn. “ And do yu call yourself a man ? ”

“ Tu nobles ! tu nobles ! ” shrieked he again, hopping about at oar’s length.

“ Tu ? And would you sell your soul under ten ? ”

“ Oh, if that is it,” cried poor Campian, “ give her ten give her ten, brother Pars—Morgans, I mean; and tak

care of your shins. Certainly she is some Lamia, some Gorgon, some——”

“Take that, for your Lamys and Gorgons to an honest woman !” and in a moment poor Campian’s thin legs were cut from under him, while the virago, “mounting on his trunk astride,” like that more famous one on Hudibras, cried, “Ten nobles, or I’ll keep you here till morning !” And the ten nobles were paid into her hand.

And now the boat, its dragon guardian being pacified, was run down to the sea, and close past the nook where poor little Rose was squeezing herself into the farthest and darkest corner, among wet seaweed and rough barnacles, holding her breath as they approached.

They passed her and the boat’s keel was already in the water.

But the night’s adventures were not ended yet; for just as the boat was launched, a faint halloo was heard upon the beach, and a minute after, a horseman plunged down the pebbles, and along the sand, and pulling his horse up on its haunches close to the terrified group, dropped, rather than leaped, from the saddle.

The serving-man, though he dared not tackle a witch, knew well enough how to deal with a swordsman; and drawing, sprang upon the newcomer : and then recoiled—

“God forgive me, it’s Mr. Eustace ! Oh, dear sir, I took you for one of Sir Richard’s men ! Oh, sir, you’re hurt ?”

“A scratch, a scratch !” almost moaned Eustace. “Help me into the boat, Jack. Gentlemen, I must with you.”

“Not with us, surely, my dear son, vagabonds upon the face of the earth ?” said kind-hearted Campian.

“With you, for ever. All is over here. Whither God and the cause lead”—and he staggered toward the boat.

“Who has wounded you ?” asked Campian.

“My cousin—Amyas—and taken the letter !”

“The Devil take him, then !” cried Parsons, stamping up and down upon the sand in fury.

“Ay, curse him—you may ! I dare not ! He saved me—sent me here !”—and with a groan, he made an effort to enter the boat.

“Oh, my dear young gentleman,” cried Lucy Passmore, her woman’s heart bursting out at the sight of pain, “you

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must not goo forth with a grane wound like to that. Do ye let me just bind mun up—do ye now!” and she advanced.

Eustace thrust her back.

“No ! better bear it. I deserve it—devils ! I deserve it ! On board, or we shall all be lost—William Cary is close behind me !”

And at that news the boat was thrust into the sea, faster than ever it went before, and only in time ; for it was but just round the rocks, and out of sight, when the rattle of Cary’s horse-hoofs was heard above.

“That rascal of Mr. Leigh’s will catch it now, the Popish villain !” said Lucy Passmore aloud. “You lie still there, dear life, and settle your sperrits ; you’m so safe as ever was rabbit to burrow. I’ll see what happens, if I die for it !” And so saying, she squeezed herself up through a cleft to a higher ledge, from whence she could see what passed in the valley.

“There mun is ! in the meadow, trying to catch the horses ! There comes Mr. Cary ! Goodness, Father, how a rid’th ! he’s over wall already ! Ron, Jack ! ron then ! A’ll get to the river ! No, a wain’t ! Goodness, Father ! There’s Mr. Cary cotched mun ! A’s down, a’s down !”

“Is he dead ?” asked Rose, shuddering.

“No, fegs, no ! kecking mun, kecking mun, so hard as ever was futeball ! Goodness, Father, who did ever ? If a haven’t kecked mun right into the river, and got on mun’s horse and rod away !”

And so saying, down she came again.

“And now then, my dear life, us be better to go hoom and get you sommat warm. You’m mortal cold, I rackon, by now. I was cruel fear’d for ye : but I kept mun off clever, didn’t I, now ?”

“I wish—I wish I had not seen Mr. Leigh’s face !”

“Iss, dreadful, weren’t it, poor young soul ; a sad night for his poor mother !”

“Lucy, I can’t get his face out of my mind. I’m sure he overlooked me.”

“Oh then ! who ever heard the like o’ that ? When young gentlemen do overlook young ladies, tain’t this fashion, I knoo. Never you think on it.”

“But I can’t help thinking of it,” said Rose. “Stop Shall we go home yet ? Where’s that servant ?”

“Never mind, he wain’t see us, here under the hill

I'd much sooner to know where my old man was. I've a sort of a forecasting in my inwards, like, as I always has when aught's going to happen, as though I shuldn't zee mun again, like I have, Miss. Well—he was a bedient old soul, after all, he was. Goodness, Father ! and all this while us have forgot the very thing us come about ! Who did you see ? ”

“ Only that face ! ” said Rose, shuddering.

“ Not in the glass, maid ! Say then, not in the glass ? ”

“ Would to heaven it had been ! Lucy, what if he were the man I was fated to——”

“ He ? Why, he's a praste, a Popish praste, that can't marry if he would, poor wratch.”

“ He is none; and I have cause enough to know it ! ” And, for want of a better confidante, Rose poured into the willing ears of her companion the whole story of yesterday's meeting.

“ He's a pretty wooer ! ” said Lucy at last, contemptuously. “ Be a brave maid, then, be a brave maid, and never terrify yourself with his unlucky face. It's because there was none here worthy of ye, that ye seed none in glass.”

But in spite of all the good dame's flattery, Rose could not wipe that fierce face away from her eyeballs. She reached home safely, and crept to bed undiscovered; and when the next morning, as was to be expected, found her laid up with something very like a fever, from excitement, terror and cold, the phantom grew stronger and stronger before her, and it required all her woman's tact and self-restraint to avoid betraying by her exclamations what had happened on that fantastic night. After a fortnight's weakness, however, she recovered and went back to Bideford; but ere she arrived there, Amyas was far across the seas on his way to Milford Haven, as shall be told in the ensuing chapters.

CHAPTER VII

OLD Stow House stands, or rather stood, some four miles beyond the Cornish border, on the northern slope of the largest and loveliest of those coombes of which I spoke in the last chapter; and up and down the terraced garden paced Amyas and Sir Richard, talking long, earnestly, and slow; for they both knew that the turning-point of the boy's life was come.

"Yes," said Sir Richard, after Amyas in his blunt simple way had told him the whole story about Rose Salterne and his brother,—“yes, sweet lad, thou hast chosen the better part, thou and thy brother also, and it shall not be taken from you. Only be strong, lad, and trust in God that He will make a man of you.”

“And I may go to Ireland to-morrow?”

“You shall sail in the *Mary* for Milford Haven, with these letters to Winter. If the wind serves, you may bid the master drop down the river to-night, and be off; for we must lose no time.”

“Winter?” said Amyas. “He is no friend of mine, since he left Drake and us so cowardly in the Straits of Magellan.”

“Duty must not wait for private quarrels, even though they be just ones, lad; but he will not be your general. When you come to the Marshal, or the Lord Deputy, give either of them this letter, and they will set you work,—and hard work too, I warrant.”

“I want nothing better.”

“Right, lad; the best reward for having wrought well already, is to have more to do; and he that has been faithful over a few things, must find his account in being made ruler over many things. That is the true and heroical rest, which only is worthy of gentlemen and sons of God.”

When they went down into the house, the first person whom they met was the old steward, in search of his master.

“There is a manner of roog, Sir Richard, a masterless man, at the door; a very forward fellow, and must needs speak with you.”

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"A masterless man? He had better not speak to me, unless he is in love with gaol and gallows."

"Well, your worship," said the steward, "I expect that is what he does want, for he swears he will not leave the gate till he has seen you."

"Seen me? Halidame! he shall see me, here and at Launceston too, if he likes. Bring him in."

"Fegs, Sir Richard, we are half afeard, with your good leave——"

"Hillo, Tony," cried Amyas, "who was ever afeard yet with Sir Richard's good leave?"

"What, has the fellow a tail or horns?"

"Massy no: but I be afeard of treason for your honour; for the fellow is pinked all over in heathen patterns, and as brown as a filbert; and a tall roog, a very strong roog, sir, and a foreigner too, and a mighty staff with him."

"Pinked all over? He must be a sailor," said Amyas, "let me out and see the fellow, and if he needs putting forth——"

"Why, I daresay he is not so big but what he will go into thy pocket. So go, lad, while I finish my writing."

Amyas went out, and at the back door, leaning on his staff, stood a tall, raw-boned, ragged man, "pinked all over," as the steward had said.

"Hillo, lad!" quoth Amyas. "Before we come to talk, thou wilt please to lay down that Plymouth cloak of thine." And he pointed to the cudgel, which among West-country mariners usually bore that name.

"I'll warrant," said the old steward, "that where he found his cloak he found a purse not far off."

"But not hose or doublet; so the magical virtue of his staff has not helped him much. But put down thy staff, man, and speak like a Christian, if thou be one."

"I am a Christian, though I look like a heathen; and so rogue, though a masterless man, alas! But I want nothing, deserving nothing, and only ask to speak with Sir Richard, before I go on my way."

There was something stately and yet humble about the man's tone and manner which attracted Amyas, and he asked more gently where he was going and whence he came.

"From Padstow Port, sir, to Clovelly town, to see

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my old mother, if indeed she be yet alive, which God knoweth."

"Clovally man! why didn't thee say thee was Clovally man?" asked all the grooms at once, to whom a West-countryman was of course a brother. The old steward asked—

"What's thy mother's name, then?"

"Susan Yeo."

"What, that lived under the archway?" asked a groom.

"Lived?" said the man.

"Iss, sure; her died three days since, so we heard, poor soul."

The man stood quite silent and unmoved for a minute or two; and then said quietly to himself, in Spanish, "That which is, is best."

"You speak Spanish?" asked Amyas, more and more interested.

"I had need to do so, young sir; I have been five years in the Spanish Main, and only set foot on shore two days ago; and if you will let me have speech of Sir Richard, I will tell him that at which both the ears of him that heareth it shall tingle."

"And you shall," said Amyas. "Steward, we will have this man in; for all his rags, he is a man of wit."

So in they went, where Sir Richard sat in his library among books, despatches, state papers, and warrants.

"Hillo, Amyas, have you bound the wild man already and brought him in to swear allegiance?"

But before Amyas could answer, the man looked earnestly on him—"Amyas?" said he; "is that your name, sir?"

"Amyas Leigh is my name, at your service, good fellow."

"Of Burrough by Bideford?"

"Why then? What do you know of me?"

"O sir, sir! young brains and happy ones have short memories; but old and sad brains too too long ones often! Do you mind one that was with Mr. Oxenham, sir? A swearing reprobate he was, God forgive him, and hath forgiven him, too, for His dear Son's sake—one, sir, that gave you a horn, a toy with a chart on it?"

"Soul alive!" cried Amyas, catching him by the hand. "and are you he? The horn? why, I have it still, and

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will keep it to my dying day, too. But where is Mr. Oxenham ? ”

“ Yes, my good fellow, where is Mr. Oxenham ? ” asked Sir Richard, rising. “ You are somewhat over-hasty in welcoming your old acquaintance, Amyas, before we have heard from him whether he can give honest account of himself and of his captain. For there is more than one way by which sailors may come home without their captains, as poor Mr. Barker of Bristol found to his cost. God grant that there may have been no such traitorous dealings here.”

“ Well, sirs, I went, as Mr. Leigh knows, to Nombre de Dios, with Mr. Drake and Mr. Oxenham, in 1572, where what we saw and did, your worship, I suppose, knows as well as I; and there was, as you’ve heard maybe, a covenant between Mr. Oxenham and Mr. Drake to sail the South Seas together, which they made, your worship, in my hearing, under the tree over Panama. For when Mr. Drake came down from the tree, after seeing the sea afar off, Mr. Oxenham and I went up and saw it too; and when we came down, Drake says, ‘ John, I have made a vow to God that I will sail that water, if I live and God gives me grace ’; which he had done, sir, upon his bended knees, like a godly man as he always was, and would I had taken after him ! and Mr. O. says, ‘ I am with you, Drake, to live or die, and I think I know some one there already, so we shall not be quite among strangers ’; and laughed withal. Well, sirs, that voyage, as you know, never came off, because Captain Drake was fighting in Ireland; so Mr. Oxenham, who must be up and doing, sailed for himself, and I who loved him, God knows, like a brother (saving the difference in our ranks), helped him to get the crew together, and went as his gunner.

“ Well, sirs, we came to the shore of New Spain, near to the old place—that’s Nombre de Dios; and there Mr. Oxenham went ashore into the woods with a boat’s crew, to find the negroes who helped us three years before.

“ After three days the Captain comes back, looking heavy enough, and says, ‘ We played our trick once too often, when we played it once. There is no chance of stopping another reco (that is, a mule-train, sirs) now. The Cimaroons say that since our last visit they never move without plenty of soldiers, two hundred shot at least.

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Therefore,' he said, ' my gallants, we must either return empty-handed from this, the very market and treasury of the whole Indies, or do such a deed as men never did before, which I shall like all the better for that very reason.' And we, asking his meaning, ' Why,' he said, ' if Drake will not sail the South Seas, we will,' and, for our confirmation, showed me and the rest the superscription of a letter : and said, ' How I came by this is none of your business : but I have had it in my bosom ever since I left Plymouth; and I tell you now, what I forbore to tell you at first, that the South Seas have been my mark all along ! such news have I herein of plate ships, and gold ships, and what not, which will come up from Quito and Lima this very month, all which, with the pearls of the Gulf of Panama, and other wealth unspeakable, will be ours, if we have but true English hearts within us.'

" At which, gentles, we were like madmen for lust of that gold, and cheerfully undertook a toil incredible; for first we run our ship aground in a great wood which grew in the very sea itself, and then took out her masts, and covered her in boughs, with her four cast pieces of great ordnance, and leaving no man in her, started for the South Seas across the neck of Panama, with two small pieces of ordnance and our culverins, and good store of victuals, and with us six of those negroes for a guide, and so twelve leagues to a river which runs into the South Sea.

" And there, having cut wood, we made a pinnace (and work enough we had at it) of five-and-forty foot in the keel; and in her down the stream, and to the Isle of Pearls in the Gulf of Panama."

" Into the South Sea ? Impossible ! " said Sir Richard. " Have a care what you say, my man, for there is that about you which would make me sorry to find you out a liar."

" Impossible or not, liar or none, we went there, sir."

" Question him, Amyas, lest he turn out to have been beforehand with you."

The man looked inquiringly at Amyas, who said—

" Well, my man, of the Gulf of Panama I cannot ask you, for I never was inside it, but what other parts of the coast do you know ? "

" Every inch, sir, from Cabo San Francisco to Lima ;

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more is my sorrow, for I was a galley-slave there for two years and more."

"You know Lima?"

"I was there three times, worshipful gentlemen, and the last was February come two years; and there I helped lade a great plate ship, the *Cacafuogo*, they called her."

Amyas started. Sir Richard nodded to him gently to be silent, and then—

"And what became of her, my lad?"

"God knows, who knows all, and the devil who freighted her. I broke prison six weeks afterwards, and never heard but that she got safe into Panama."

"Fellow, fellow!" cried Sir Richard, springing up, "either thou art the cunningest liar that ever earned a halter, or thou hast done a deed the like of which never man had ventured. Dost thou not know that Captain Drake took that *Cacafuogo* and all her freight, in February come two years?"

"Glory to God! Glory to God! O Lord, I thank thee! Captain Drake in the South Seas! The blood of thy innocents avenged, O Lord! The spoiler spoiled, and the proud robbed; and all they whose hands were mighty have found nothing. Glory, glory! Oh, tell me, sir, did she fight?"

"We gave her three pieces of ordnance only, and struck down her mizzenmast, and then boarded sword in hand, but never had need to strike a blow; and before we left her, one of her own boys had changed her name, and rechristened her the *Cacaplata*."

"Glory, glory! Cowards they are, as I told them. I told them they would never stand the Devon mastiffs, and well they flogged me for saying it; but they could not stop my mouth. Oh sir, tell me, did you get the ship that came up after her?"

"What was that?"

"A long race-ship, sir, from Guayaquil, with an old gentleman on board—Don Francisco de Xararte was his name, and by token he had a gold falcon hanging to a chain round his neck, and a green stone in the breast of it. I saw it as we rowed him aboard. Oh tell me, sir, tell me for the love of God did you take that ship?"

"We did take that ship, and the jewel too, and her Majesty has it at this very hour."

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"Then, tell me, sir," said he slowly, as if he dreaded an answer; "tell me, sir, and oh try and mind—was there a little maid aboard with the old gentleman?"

"A little maid? Let me think. No; I saw none."

The man settled his features again sadly.

"What have you to do with this little maid, then, good fellow?" asked Grenville.

"Ah, sir, before I tell you that, I must go back and finish the story of Mr. Oxenham, if you will believe me enough to hear it.

"Well, sirs both—To the Island of Pearls we came, we and some of the negroes. We found many huts, and Indians fishing for pearls, and also a fair house, with porches; but no Spaniard therein, save one man; at which Mr. Oxenham was like a man transported, and fell on that Spaniard crying, 'Perro, where is the bark from Lima?' and the Spaniard, being terrified, said that the ship from Lima was expected in a fortnight's time. So for ten days we lay quiet, letting neither negro nor Spaniard leave the island, and took good store of pearls, feeding sumptuously on wild cattle and hogs until the tenth day, when there came by a small bark; her we took, and found her from Quito, and on board 60,000 pezos of gold and other store. With which if we had been content, gentlemen, all had gone well. And some were willing to go back at once, having both treasure and pearls in plenty; but Mr. O., he waxed right mad, and swore to slay any one who made that motion again, assuring us that the Lima ship of which he had news was far greater and richer, and would make princes of us all; which bark came in sight on the sixteenth day, and was taken without shot or slaughter. The taking of which bark, I verily believe, was the ruin of every mother's son of us."

And being asked why, he answered, "First, because of the discontent which was bred thereby; for on board was found no gold, but only 100,000 pezos of silver.

"And in that bark of Lima Mr. Oxenham took a young lady, as fair as the sunshine, sir, and seemingly about two or three-and-twenty years of age, having with her a tall young lad of sixteen, and a little girl, a marvellously pretty child, of about six or seven. And the lady herself was of an excellent beauty, like a whale's tooth for whiteness, so that all the crew wondered at her, and could

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not be satisfied with looking upon her. And, gentlemen, this was strange, that the lady seemed in no wise afraid or mournful, and bid her little girl fear nought.

“ Well, sirs, we came back to the mouth of the river, and there began our troubles; for the negroes, as soon as we were on shore, called on Mr. Oxenham to fulfil the bargain he had made with them. And now it came out (what few of us knew till then) that he had agreed with the Cimaroons that they should have all the prisoners which were taken, save the gold. And he, though loth, was about to give up the Spaniards to them, near forty in all, supposing that they intended to use them as slaves: but as we all stood talking, one of the Spaniards, understanding what was forward, threw himself on his knees before Mr. Oxenham, and shrieking like a madman, entreated not to be given up into the hands of ‘ those devils,’ said he, ‘ who never take a Spanish prisoner, but they roast him alive.’ We asked the negroes if this was possible. To which some answered, ‘ What was that to us ? ’ But others said boldly, that it was true enough, and that revenge made the best sauce. At this we were like men amazed for very horror; and Mr. Oxenham stoutly bade put the prisoners on board the ships again, and so let the prizes go, taking with him only the treasure, and the lady and the little maid. And so the lad went on to Panama.

“ Well, sirs, the Cimaroons after that went away from us, swearing revenge (for which we cared little enough), and we rowed up the river to a place where three streams met, and then up the least of the three, some four days’ journey, till it grew all shoal and swift; and there we hauled the pinnace upon the sands, and Mr. Oxenham asked the men whether they were willing to carry the gold and silver over the mountains to the North Sea. Some of them at first were loth to do it, and I and others advised that we should leave the plate behind, and take the gold only, for it would have cost us three or four journeys at the least. But Mr. Oxenham promised every man 100 pezos of silver over and above his wages, which made them content enough, and we were all to start the morrow morning. But, sirs, that night, as God had ordained, came a mishap by some rash speeches of Mr. Oxenham’s, which threw all abroad again; for when we had carried

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the treasure about half a league inland, and hidden it away in a house which we made of boughs, Mr. O. being always full of that his fair lady, spoke to me and William Penberthy of Marazion, my good comrade, and a few more, saying, 'That we had no need to return to England, seeing that we were already in the very garden of Eden, and wanted for nothing, but could live without labour or toil; and that it was better, when we got over to the North Sea, to go and seek out some fair island, and there dwell in joy and pleasure till our lives' end.' And much more of the like; which words I liked well,—my mind, alas ! being given altogether to carnal pleasure and vanity,—as did William Penberthy, my good comrade, on whom I trust God has had mercy. But the rest, sirs, took the matter all across, and began murmuring against the Captain, saying that they would have at least one merry night before they were slain by the Cimaroons, or eaten by panthers and lagartos; and so got out of the pinnace two great skins of Canary wine, which were taken in the Lima prize, and sat themselves down to drink; and at last, being heated with wine, began afresh to murmur at the Captain. And one speaking of his counsel about the island, the rest altogether took it amiss and out of the way; and some sprang up crying treason, and others that he meant to defraud them of the plate which he had promised, and others that he meant to desert them in a strange land, and so forth, till Mr. O., hearing the hubbub, came out to them from the house, when they reviled him foully, swearing that he meant to cheat them. Then Mr. Oxenham called out, 'All honest men who know me, and can trust me, stand by your lawful Captain against these ruffians.' Whereon, sirs, I, and Penberthy, my good comrade, and four Plymouth men, who had sailed with Mr. O. in Mr. Drake's ship, came over to him, and swore before God to stand by him and the lady. Then said Mr. O. to the rest, 'Will you carry this treasure, knaves, or will you not ? Give me an answer here.' And they refused, unless he would, before they started, give each man his share. So Mr. O. waxed very mad, and swore that he would never be served by men who did not trust him, and so went in again; and that night was spent in great disquiet. And next morning when the wine was gone out of them, Mr. O. asked them whether they would

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go to the hills with him and find those negroes, and persuade them after all to carry the treasure. To which they agreed after a while, thinking that so they should save themselves labour; and went off with Mr. Oxenham, leaving us six who had stood by him to watch the lady and the treasure. So he parted with much weeping and wailing of the lady, and was gone seven days; and all that time we kept that lady faithfully and honestly, bringing her the best we could find, and serving her upon our bended knees. But she kept always within the house, which the little maid (God bless her !) did not, but soon learned to play with us and we with her, so that we made great cheer of her, gentlemen, sailor fashion.

“ Well, sirs, on the seventh day we six were down by the pinnace clearing her out, and the little maid, with us gathering of flowers, and William Penberthy fishing on the bank, about a hundred yards below, when on a sudden he leaps up and runs towards us, crying that the Spaniards were upon us.

“ Which was too true; for before we could win the house, there were full eighty shot at our heels, but could not overtake us; nevertheless, some of them stopping, fixed their calivers and let fly, killing one of the Plymouth men. The rest of us escaped to the house, and catching up the lady, fled forth, not knowing whither we went, while the Spaniards, finding the house and treasure, pursued us no farther.

“ For all that day and the next we wandered in great misery, the lady weeping continually, and calling for Mr. Oxenham most piteously, and the little maid likewise, till with much ado we found the track of our comrades, and went up that as best we might: but at nightfall, by good hap, we met the whole crew coming back, and with them two hundred negroes or more, with bows and arrows. At which sight was great joy and embracing, and it was a strange thing, sirs, to see the lady; for before that she was altogether desperate: and yet she was now a very lioness, as soon as she had got her love again; and prayed him earnestly not to care for that gold, but to go forward to the North Sea, and then—they being a little apart from the rest—pointed round to the green forest, and said in Spanish—which I suppose they knew not that I understood,—‘ See, all around us is Paradise. Were it not

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enough for you and me to stay here for ever, and let them take the gold or leave it as they will ? ’

“ To which Mr. Oxenham—‘ No, no, my life. It stands upon my honour both to fulfil my bond with these men, whom I have brought hither, and to take home to England at least something of my prize as a proof of my own valour.’ ”

“ So after much ado, back they went again; I and Penberthy, and the three Plymouth men which escaped from the pinnacle, keeping the lady as before.

“ Well, sirs, we waited five days, having made houses of boughs as before, without hearing aught; and on the sixth we saw coming afar off Mr. Oxenham, and with him fifteen or twenty men, who seemed very weary and wounded; and when we looked for the rest to be behind them, behold there were no more; at which, sirs, as you may well think, our hearts sank within us.

“ And Mr. O., coming nearer, cried out afar off, ‘ All is lost ! ’ and so walked into the camp without a word, and sat himself down at the foot of a great tree with his head between his hands, speaking neither to the lady nor to any one.

“ But the men were full of curses against the negroes, for their cowardice and treachery; and told me how they found the enemy awaiting them in a little copse of green trees, well fortified with barricades of boughs, and having with them our two falcons, which they had taken out of the pinnacle. And how Mr. Oxenham set upon them with great fury, and would have utterly driven them out, but that the negroes, who had come on with much howling, like very wild beasts, being suddenly scared with the shot and noise of the ordnance, turned and fled, leaving the Englishmen alone; in which evil strait Mr. O. fought like a very Guy of Warwick, and I verily believe every man of them likewise; for there was none of them who had not his shrewd scratch to show. And so they miserably drew off, having lost in men eleven killed and seven taken alive, besides five of the rascal negroes who were killed before they had time to run; and there was an end of the matter.

“ But the next day, a great party of negroes came upon us, and with much friendly show bade us flee for our lives, for the Spaniards were upon us in great force. And so we were up and away again, hardly able to drag our legs after

us for hunger and weariness, and the broiling heat. And some were taken (God help them !) and some fled with the negroes, of whom what became God alone knoweth.

“And so, to make few words of a sad matter, at last there were none left but Mr. Oxenham and the lady and the little maid, together with me and William Penberthy of Marazion, my good comrade. And it befell upon a day, that we came into a great wood of ferns, where was very pleasant shade, cool and green; and there, gentlemen, we sat down on a bank of moss, like folk desperate and fordone, and every one looked the other in the face for a long while.

“But on a sudden there was a great cry in the wood, and coming through the trees on all sides Spanish arquebusiers, a hundred strong at least, and negroes with them, who bade us stand or they would shoot. William Penberthy leapt up crying ‘Treason!’ and running upon the nearest negro ran him through, and then another, and then falling on the Spaniards, fought manfully until he was borne down with pikes, and so died. But I, seeing nothing better to do, sate still. And so we were all taken, and I and Mr. Oxenham bound with cords; but the soldiers made a litter for the lady and child, by commandment of Señor Diego de Trees, their commander, a very courteous gentleman.

“Well, sirs, we were brought down to the river-side; there we went over in boats, and found waiting for us certain Spanish gentlemen, and among others one old and ill-favoured man, grey-bearded and bent, in a suit of black velvet, who seemed to be a great man among them. And if you will believe me, Mr. Leigh, that was none other than the old man with the gold falcon at his breast, Don Francisco Xararte by name, whom you found aboard of the Lima ship. As soon as the lady came to shore, that old man ran upon her sword in hand, and would have slain her, but some there held him back. On which he turned to, and reviled with every foul and spiteful word which he could think of, so that some there bade him be silent for shame; and Mr. Oxenham said, ‘It is worthy of you, Don Francisco, thus to trumpet abroad your own disgrace. Did I not tell you years ago that you were a cur; and are you not proving my words for me?’

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“ He answered, ‘ English dog, would to Heaven I had ever seen you ! ’

“ And Mr. Oxenham, ‘ Spanish ape, would to Heaven that I had sent my dagger through your herring-ribs when you passed me behind St. Ildegonde’s church, eight years last Easter-eve.’ At which the old man turned pale, and then began again to upbraid the lady, vowing that he would have her burnt alive.

“ ‘ Would that you had burnt me alive on my wedding-morning, and spared me eight years of misery ! ’ And he—

“ ‘ Misery ? Hear the witch, Señors ! Oh, have I not pampered her, heaped with jewels, clothes, coaches, what not ? The saints alone know what I have spent on her. What more would she have of me ? ’

“ To which she answered only but this one word, ‘ Fool ! ’ but in so terrible a voice, though low, that they who were about to laugh at the old pantaloon, were more minded to weep for her.

“ ‘ Fool ! ’ she said again after a while. ‘ I will waste no words upon you. Farewell, my love, my life ! and farewell Señors ! May you be more merciful to your daughters than my parents were to me ! ’ And so catching a dagger from the girdle of one of the soldiers, smote herself to the heart, and fell dead before them all.

“ At which Mr. Oxenham smiled, and said, ‘ That was worthy of us both. If you will unbind my hands, Señors, I shall be most happy to copy so fair a schoolmistress.

“ But Don Diego shook his head, and said—

“ ‘ It were well for you, valiant Señor, were I at liberty to do so; but on questioning those of your sailors, whom I have already taken, I cannot hear that you have any letters of licence, either from the Queen of England, or any other potentate. I am compelled, therefore, to ask you, whether this is so; for it is a matter of life and death.’

“ To which Mr. Oxenham answered merrily, ‘ That so it was : but that he was not aware that any potentate’s licence was required to permit a gentleman’s meeting his lady-love; and that as for the gold which they had taken, if they had never allowed that fresh and fair young May to be forced into marrying that old January, he should never have meddled with their gold; so that was rather

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their fault than his.' And added, that if he was to be hanged, as he supposed, the only favour which he asked for was a long drop and no priests. And all the while, gentlemen, he still kept his eyes fixed on the lady's corpse, till he was led away with me, while all that stood by, God reward them for it, lamented openly the tragical end of those two lovers.

"And now, sirs, what befell me after that matters little; for I never saw Captain Oxenham again, nor ever shall in this life."

"He was hanged, then?"

"So I heard for certain the next year, and with him the gunner and sundry more; but some were given away for slaves to the Spaniards, and may be alive now, unless, like me, they have fallen into the cruel clutches of the Inquisition."

And his voice, as he finished, sank from very weariness of soul; while Sir Richard sat opposite him in silence, his elbows on the table, his cheeks on his doubled fists, looking him through and through with kindling eyes. No one spoke for several minutes; and then—

"Amyas, you have heard this story. You believe it?"

"Every word, sir, or I should not have the heart of a Christian man."

"So do I. Anthony!"

The butler entered.

"Take this man to the buttery; clothe him comfortably, and feed him with the best; and bid the knaves treat him as if he were their own father."

But Yeo lingered.

"If I might be so bold as to ask your worship a favour?—"

"Anything in reason, my brave fellow."

"If your worship could put me in the way of another adventure to the Indies?"

"Another! Hast not had enough of the Spaniards already?"

"Never enough, sir, when one of the idolatrous tyrants is left unhanged," said he, with a right bitter smile. "But it's not for that only, sir, but my little maid—Oh, sir! my little maid, that I swore to Mr. Oxenham to look to, and never saw her from that day to this! I must find her, sir, or I shall go mad, I believe. Not a night but she com

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and calls to me in my dreams, the poor darling; and not a morning but when I wake there is my oath lying on my soul, like a great black cloud, and I no nearer the keeping of it."

"My good fellow, there are no adventures to the Indies forward now; but if you want to fight Spaniards, here is a gentleman will show you the way. Amyas, take him with you to Ireland. If he has learnt half the lessons God has set him to learn, he ought to stand you in good stead."

So out went Yeo to eat, and Amyas, having received his despatches, got ready for his journey home.

"Go the short way over the moors, lad; and send back Cary's grey when you can. You must not lose an hour, but be ready to sail the moment the wind goes about."

CHAPTER VIII

AMYAS could not sail the next day, or the day after; for the south-wester freshened, and blew three parts of gale dead into the bay. So having got the *Mary Grenville* down the river into Appledore pool, ready to start with the first shift of wind, he went quietly home; and when his mother started on a pillion behind the old serving-man to ride to Clovelly, where Frank lay wounded, he went in with her as far as Bideford, and there met, coming down the High Street, a procession of horsemen headed by Will Cary. Behind him, upon country ponies, came four or five stout serving-men, carrying his lances and baggage, and their own long-bows, swords, and bucklers; and behind all, in a horse-litter, to Mrs. Leigh's great joy, Master Frank himself. He deposed that his wounds were only flesh-wounds, the dagger having turned against his ribs; that he must see the last of his brother; and that with her good leave he would not come home to Burrough, but take up his abode with Cary in the Ship Tavern, close to the Bridge-foot.

But in the meanwhile, he and Amyas concocted a scheme which was put into effect the next day (being market-day); first by the innkeeper, who began under Amyas's orders a bustle of roasting, boiling, and frying, unparalleled in the annals of the Ship Tavern; and next by Amyas himself, who, going out into the market, invited as many of his old schoolfellows, one by one apart, as Frank had pointed out to him, to a merry supper and a "rowse" thereon consequent; by which crafty scheme, in came each of Rose Salterne's gentle admirers, and found himself, to his considerable disgust, seated at the same table with six rivals, to none of whom had he spoken for the last six months. However, all were too well bred to let the Leighs discern as much; and they (though, of course, they knew all) settled their guests, Frank on his couch lying at the head of the table, and Amyas taking the bottom: and contrived, by filling all mouths with good things, to save them the pain

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speaking to each other till the wine should have loosened their tongues and warmed their hearts.

"And now, gentlemen," said Frank, "let me give you a health which none of you, I dare say, will refuse to drink with heart and soul as well as with lips;—the health of one whom beauty and virtue have so ennobled, that in their light the shadow of lowly birth is unseen;—the health of one whom I would proclaim as peerless in loveliness, were it not that every gentleman here has sisters. Gentlemen, your hearts, I doubt not, have already bid you, as my unworthy lips do now, to drink 'The Rose of Torridge.'"

"Well done, cunning Frank Leigh!" cried blunt Will Cary; "none of us dare quarrel with you now, however much we may sulk at each other. For there's none of us, I'll warrant, but thinks that she likes him the best of all; and so we are bound to believe that you have drunk our healths all round."

"And so I have; and what better thing can you do, gentlemen, than to drink each other's healths all round likewise: and so show yourselves true gentlemen, true Christians, ay, and true lovers? For what is love (let me speak freely to you, gentlemen and guests), what is love, but the very inspiration of that Deity whose name is Love? If there is to be rivalry among us, let it be a rivalry in nobleness, an emulation in virtue. Let each try to outstrip the other in loyalty to his Queen, in valour against her foes, in deeds of courtesy and mercy to the afflicted and oppressed; and thus our love will indeed prove its own divine origin, by raising us nearer to those gods whose gift it is. But yet I show you a more excellent way, and that is charity. Why should we not make this common love to her, whom I am unworthy to name, the sacrament of a common love to each other?"

He ceased, and there was a pause.

At last young Fortescue spoke.

"I may be paying you a left-handed compliment sir: but it seems to me that you are so likely, in that case, to become your own faithful friend and hearty servant (even if you have not borne off the belle already while we have been asleep), that the bargain is hardly fair between such a gay Italianist and us country swains."

"You undervalue yourself and your country, my dear

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sir. But set your mind at rest. I know no more of that lady's mind than you do : nor shall I know. For the sake of my own peace, I have made a vow neither to see her, nor to hear, if possible, tidings of her, till three full years are past."

Mr. Coffin rose.

"Gentlemen, I may submit to be outdone by Mr. Leigh in eloquence, but not in generosity; if he leaves these parts for three years, I do so also."

"And go in charity with all mankind," said Cary. "Give us your hand, old fellow. I was minded to have fought thee this day——"

"I should have been most happy, sir," said Coffin.

—"But now I am all love and charity to mankind. Come along! Join hands all round, and swear eternal friendship, as brothers of the sacred order of the—of what? Frank Leigh? Open thy mouth, Daniel, and christen us!"

"The Rose!" said Frank quietly, seeing that his new love-philtre was working well, and determined to strike while the iron was hot, and carry the matter too far to carry it back again.

"The Rose!" cried Cary, catching hold of Coffin's hand with his right, and Fortescue's with his left. "Come, Mr. Coffin! Bend, sturdy oak! 'Woe to the stiff-necked and stouthearted!' says Scripture."

And somehow or other, whether it was Frank's chivalrous speech, or Cary's fun, or Amyas's good wine, or the nobleness which lies in every young lad's heart, if their elders will take the trouble to call it out, the whole party came in to terms one by one, shook hands all round, and vowed on the hilt of Amyas's sword to stand by each other and by their lady-love.

And Frank watched and listened with one of his quiet smiles and only said: "Gentlemen, be sure that you will never repent this day."

"Repent?" said Cary. "I feel already as angelical as thou lookest, Saint Silvertongue. What was it that needed?—the cat?"

"The lion, rather, by the roar of it," said Amyas, making a dash at the arras behind him. "Why, here is the doorway here! and——"

And rushing under the arras, through an open door

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behind, he returned, dragging out by the head Mr. John Brimblecombe.

Who was Mr. John Brimblecombe ?

If you have forgotten him, you have done pretty nearly what every one else in the room had done. But you recollect a certain fat lad, son of the schoolmaster, whom Sir Richard punished for talebearing three years before, by sending him, not to Coventry, but to Oxford. That was the man. He was now one-and-twenty, and a bachelor of Oxford, where he had learnt such things as were taught in those days, with more or less success ; and he was now hanging about Bideford once more, intending to return after Christmas and read divinity, that he might become a parson, and a shepherd of souls in his native land.

The innkeeper was a friend of his ; for, in the first place, they had lived within three doors of each other all their lives ; and next, Jack was quite pleasant company enough, beside being a learned man and an Oxford scholar, to be asked in now and then to the innkeeper's private parlour, when there were no gentlemen there, to crack his little joke and tell his little story, sip the leavings of the guests' sack, and sometimes help the host to eat the leavings of their supper. And it was, perhaps, with some such hope that Jack trotted off round the corner to the Ship that very afternoon ; and asked for his pot of small ale (his only luxury), and stood at the bar to drink it.

"Ah, Mr. Brimblecombe !" said the host, bustling out with knife and apron to cool himself in the passage. "Here are doings ! Nine gentlemen to supper !"

"Nine ! Are they going to eat all that ?"

"Well, I can't say—that Mr. Amyas is as good as three to his trencher : but still there's crumbs, Mr. Brimblecombe, crumbs ; and waste not want not is my doctrine ; so you and I may have a somewhat to stay our stomachs, about an eight o'clock."

So Jack lingered on, hovering around the fragrant smell like a fly round a honey-pot, till he found himself invisibly attracted, and as it were, led by the nose out of the passage into the adjoining room, and to that side of the room where there was a door ; and once there he could not help hearing what passed inside ; till Rose Salterne's name fell on his ear. So, as it was ordained, he was

taken in the fact. And now behold him brought in red-hand to judgment, not without a kick or two from the wrathful foot of Amyas Leigh. Whereat there fell on him a storm of abuse, which, for the honour of that gallant company, I shall not give in detail; but which abuse, strange to say, seemed to have no effect on the impenitent and unabashed Jack, who, as soon as he could get his breath, made answer fiercely, amid much puffing and blowing.

“What business have I here? As much as any of you. I was in the next room, drinking of my beer. I couldn’t help that, could I? And then I heard her name; and I couldn’t help listening then. I tell you, and I don’t care who knows it, I’ve loved her these three years as well as e’er a one of you, I have. I’ve thought o’ nothing else, prayed for nothing else, God forgive me! And then you laugh at me, because I’m a poor parson’s son, and you fine gentlemen: God made us both, I reckon. You!—you make a deal of giving her up to-day. Why, it’s what I’ve done for three miserable years as ever poor sinner spent; ay, from the first day I said to myself, ‘Jack, if you can’t have that pearl, you’ll have none; and that you can’t have, for it’s meat for your masters: so conquer or die.’ And I couldn’t conquer. I can’t help loving her, worshipping her, no more than you; and I will die: but you needn’t laugh meanwhile at me that have done as much as you, and will do again.”

“It is the old tale,” said Frank to himself; “whom will not love transform into a hero?”

And so it was. Jack’s squeaking voice was firm and manly, his pigs’ eyes flashed very fire, his gestures were so free and earnest, that the ungainliness of his figure was forgotten; and when he finished with a violent burst of tears, Frank, forgetting his wounds, sprang up and caught him by the hand.

“John Brimblecombe, forgive me! Gentlemen, if we are gentlemen, we ought to ask his pardon. Has he not shown already more chivalry, more self-denial, and therefore more true love, than any of us?”

“Ah,” said Jack, “you make me one of your brotherhood; and see if I do not dare to suffer as much as any of you! You laugh! Do you fancy none can use a sword

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unless he has a baker's dozen of quarterings in his arms, or that Oxford scholars know only how to handle a pen ? ”

“ Let us try his metal,” said St. Leger. “ Here's my sword, Jack ; draw, Coffin ! and have at him.”

“ Nonsense ! ” said Coffin, looking somewhat disgusted at the notion of fighting a man of Jack's rank ; but Jack caught at the weapon offered to him.

“ Give me a buckler, and have at any of you ! ”

“ Here's a chair-bottom,” cried Cary ; and Jack seizing it in his left, flourished his sword so fiercely, and called so loudly to Coffin to come on, that all present found it necessary, unless they wished blood to be spilt, to turn the matter off with a laugh ; but Jack would not hear of it.

“ Nay : if you will let me be of your brotherhood, well and good : but if not, one or other I will fight. Let me be your chaplain,” said Jack, “ and pray for your luck when you're at the wars. If I do stay at home in a country curacy, 'tis not much that you need be jealous of me with her, I reckon,” said Jack, with a pathological glance at his own stomach.

“ My virtuous brother,” said Frank, “ go in peace, thou hast conquered ! ”

And so Jack was sent home, with a pint of good red Alicant wine in him (more, poor fellow, than he had tasted at once in his life before) ; while the rest had a right merry evening, and parted like good friends and sensible gentlemen of Devon. After which they all departed : Amyas and Cary to Winter's squadron ; Frank (as soon as he could travel) to the Court again ; and with him young Basset, whose father, Sir Arthur, being in London, procured for him a page's place in Leicester's household. Fortescue and Chichester went to their brothers in Dublin ; St. Leger to his uncle the Marshal of Munster ; Coffin joined Champernoun and Norris in the Netherlands ; and so the Brotherhood of the Rose was scattered far and wide, and Mistress Salterne was left alone with her looking-glass.

CHAPTER IX

It is the blessed Christmas afternoon. The light is fading down; the even-song is done; and the good folks of Bideford trooping home in merry groups, the father with his children, the lover with his sweetheart, to cakes and ale, and flapdragons and mummer's plays, and all the happy sports of Christmas night.

And where is Amyas on this same Christmas afternoon? Amyas is sitting bareheaded in a boat's stern in Merwick bay, with the spray whistling through his curls, as he shouts cheerfully—

“Pull, and with a will, my merry men all, and never mind shipping a sea. Cannon-balls are a cargo that don't spoil by taking salt water.”

His mother's presage has been true enough. Christmas has been the last of the still, dark, steaming nights of the early winter; and the western gale has been roaring for the last twelve hours upon the Irish coast. Along those sandhills flash in the evening gloom red sparks which never came from heaven; for that fort, now christened by the invaders the Fort del Oro, where flaunts the hated golden flag of Spain, holds San Josepho and eight hundred of the foe; and but three nights ago, Amyas and Yeo, and the rest of Winter's shrewdest hands, flung four culverins out of the Admiral's main deck, and heaved them ashore, and dragged them up to the battery among the sandhills.

Amyas and his party had been on board, at the risk of their lives, for a fresh supply of shot; for Winter's battery was out of ball, and had been firing stones for the last four hours, in default of better missiles. They ran the boat on shore through the surf, where a cove in the shore made landing possible, and almost careless whether she stove or not, scrambled over the sandhills with each man his brace of shot slung across his shoulder; and Amyas, leaping into the trenches, shouted cheerfully
Salvation Yeo—

“ More food for the bull-dogs, Gunner, and plums for the Spaniards’ Christmas pudding ! ”

Once again Yeo’s eighteen-pounder roared, and away. And, oh glory ! the great yellow flag of Spain, which streamed in the gale, lifted clean into the air, flagstaff and all, and then pitched wildly down head-foremost, far to leeward.

A hurrah from the sailors, answered by the soldiers of the opposite camp, shook the very clouds above them : but ere its echoes had died away, a tall officer leapt upon the parapet of the fort, with the fallen flag in his hand, and rearing it as well as he could upon his lance point, held it firmly against the gale, while the fallen flagstaff was raised again within.

In a moment a dozen long-bows were bent at the daring foe : but Amyas behind shouted—

“ Shame, lads ! Stop and let the gallant gentleman have due courtesy ! ”

So they stopped, while Amyas, springing on the rampart of the battery, took off his hat, and bowed to the flagholder, who, as soon as relieved of his charge, returned the bow courteously, and descended.

It was by this time all but dark, and the firing began to slacken on all sides ; Salvation and his brother gunners of the force, having got their scanty supper of biscuit, having covered up their slaughtering tackle with tarpaulins, retired for the night, leaving Amyas, who had volunteered to take the watch till midnight ; and the rest (for provisions were running very short) lay down under arms among the sandhills, and grumbled themselves to sleep.

Amyas paced to and fro, looking carefully out now and then over the strip of sandhill which lay between him and the fort ; but all was blank and black, and moreover it began to rain furiously.

Suddenly he seemed to hear a rustle among the harsh sand-grass. True, the wind was whistling through it loudly enough : but that sound was not altogether like the wind. Then a soft sliding noise : something had slipped down a bank, and brought the sand down after it. Amyas stopped, crouched down beside a gun, and laid his ear to the rampart, whereby he heard clearly, as he thought, the noise of approaching feet ; whether

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rabbits or Christians, he knew not : but he shrewdly guessed the latter. He crouched lower and lower beside the culverin, and was rewarded in a minute or two by hearing something gently deposited against the mouth of the embrasure, which, by the noise, should be a piece of timber.

“ So far, so good,” said he to himself ; “ when the scaling ladder is up, the soldier follows, I suppose. I can only humbly thank them for giving my embrasure the preference. There he comes ! I hear his feet scuffling.”

He could hear plainly enough some one working himself into the mouth of the embrasure : but the plague was, that it was so dark that he could not see his hand between him and the sky, much less his foe at two yards off. However, he made a pretty fair guess as to the whereabouts, and, rising softly, discharged such a blow downwards as would have split a yule log. A volley of sparks flew up from the hapless Spaniard's armour, and a grunt issued from within it, which proved that, whether he was killed or not, the blow had not improved his respiration.

Amyas felt for his head, seized it, dragged him in over the gun, sprang into the embrasure on his knees, felt for the top of the ladder, found it, hove it clean off and out, with four or five men on it, and then of course tumbled after it ten feet into the sand, roaring like a town bull to her Majesty's liege subjects in general.

Don Guzman Maria Magdalena de Soto, who commanded the sortie, ought to have taken the work out of hand, and annihilated all therein. But alas ! here stern fate interfered. They had chosen a dark night, as was politic ; they had waited till the moon was up, lest it should be too dark, as was politic likewise : but just as they had started, on came a heavy squall of rain, through which seven moons would have given no light. The company who were to turn the left flank walked manfully down into the sea, and never found out where they were going till they were knee-deep in water. The company who were to turn the right flank, bewildered by the utter darkness, turned their own flank so often that, tired of falling into rabbit-burrows and filling their mouths with sand, they halted and prayed to all the saints for a compass and a lantern ; while the centre body, who

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held straight on by a trackway to within fifty yards of the battery, so miscalculated that short distance, that while they thought the ditch two pikes'-length off, they fell into it one over the other, and of six scaling ladders, the only one which could be found was the very one which Amyas threw down again. After which the clouds broke, the wind shifted, and the moon shone out merrily.

But where is Amyas ?

In the ditch, aware that the enemy is tumbling into it, but unable to find them; while the company above, finding it much too dark to attempt a counter sortie, have opened a smart fire of musketry and arrows on things in general, whereat the Spaniards are swearing, and the Italians spitting like venomous cats; while Amyas, not wishing to be riddled by friendly balls, has got his back against the foot of the rampart, and waits on Providence.

Suddenly the moon clears; and with one more fierce volley, the English sailors, seeing the confusion, leap down from the embrasures, and to it pell-mell.

Amyas is now in his element, and so are the brave fellows at his heels: and there are ten breathless, furious minutes among the sandhills; and then the trumpet blew a recall, and the sailors drop again by twos and threes, and are helped up into the embrasures over many a dead and dying foe; while the guns of Fort de Oro open on them, and blaze away for half an hour without reply; and then all is still once more.

Twenty minutes after, Winter and the captains who were on shore were drying themselves round a peat-fire on the beach, and talking over the skirmish, when Winter asked—

“Where is Leigh? who has seen him? I am sadly afraid he has gone too far, and been slain.”

“Slain? Never less, gentlemen!” replied the voice of the very person in question, as he stalked out of the darkness into the glare of the fire, and shot down from his shoulders into the midst of the ring, as he might a sack of corn, a huge dark body, which was gradually seen to be a man in rich armour; who being so shot down, lay quietly where he was dropped, with his feet (luckily for him mailed) in the fire.

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"I say," quoth Amyas, "some of you had better take him up, if he is to be of any use. Unlace his helm, Will Cary."

"Pull his feet out of the embers; I daresay he would have been glad enough to put us to the scarpines; but that's no reason we should put him to them."

There was no love lost between Admiral Winter and Amyas; and Amyas might certainly have reported himself in a more ceremonious manner. So Winter, whom Amyas either had not seen, or had not chosen to see, asked him pretty sharply, "What the plague he had to do with bringing dead men into camp?"

"If he's dead, it's not my fault. He was alive enough when I started with him, and I kept him right end uppermost all the way; and what would you have more, sir?"

"Mr. Leigh!" said Winter, "it behoves you to speak with somewhat more courtesy, if not with respect, to captains who are your elders and commanders."

"Ask your pardon, sir," said the giant, as he stood in front of the fire with the rain steaming and smoking off his armour; "but I was bred in a school where getting good service done was more esteemed than making fine speeches."

"Whatsoever school you were trained in, sir," said Winter, nettled at the hint about Drake; "it does not seem to have been one in which you learned to obey orders. Why did you not come in when the recall was sounded?"

"Because," said Amyas very coolly, "in the first place I did not hear it; and in the next, in my school I was taught when I had once started not to come home empty-handed."

This was too pointed; and Winter sprang up with an oath—"Do you mean to insult me, sir?"

"I am sorry, sir, that you should take a compliment to Sir Francis Drake as an insult to yourself. I brought in this gentleman because I thought he might give you good information; if he dies meanwhile, the loss will be yours, or rather the Queen's."

"Help me, then," said Cary, glad to create a diversion in Amyas's favour, "and we will bring him round"; while Captain Raleigh rose, and catching Winter's arm, drew him aside, and began talking earnestly

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"What a murrain have you, Leigh, to quarrel with Winter?" asked two or three.

"I say, my reverend fathers and dear children, do get the Don's talking tackle free again, and leave me and the Admiral to settle it our own way."

The next morning, as Amyas was discussing a scanty breakfast of biscuit (for provisions were running very short in camp), Raleigh came up to him.

"What, eating? That's more than I have done to-day."

"Sit down, and share, then."

"Nay, lad, I did not come a-begging. I have set some of my rogues to dig rabbits. But have you seen your prisoner?"

"No; nor shall, while he is in Winter's tent."

"But if Winter invites you to his tent himself, you won't refuse to come?"

"Why, no, considering his years and rank; but he knows too well to do that."

"He knows too well not to do it," said Raleigh, laughing as he walked away. And verily in half an hour came an invitation, extracted, of course, from the Admiral by Raleigh's silver tongue, which Amyas could not but obey.

"We all owe you thanks for last night's service, sir," said Winter, who had for some good reasons changed his tone. "Your prisoner is found to be a gentleman of birth and experience, and the leader of the assault last night. He has already told us more than we had hoped, for which also we are beholden to you; and indeed my Lord Grey has been asking for you already."

"I have, young sir," said a quiet and lofty voice; and Amyas saw limping from the inner tent the proud and stately figure of the stern Deputy, Lord Grey of Wilton. "having heard from many, both of your last night's prowess, and of your conduct and courage beyond the promise of your years, displayed in that ever memorable voyage, which may well be marked with the deeds of the ancient Argonauts."

Amyas bowed low; and the Lord Deputy went on. "You will needs wish to see your prisoner. You will find him such a one as you need not be ashamed to have taken, and as need not be ashamed to have been taken by you: but here he is, and will, I doubt not, answer a

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much for himself. Know each other better, gentlemen both : last night was an ill one for making acquaintances. Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto, know the hidalgo, Amyas Leigh ! ”

As he spoke, the Spaniard came forward, still in his armour, all save his head, which was bound up in a handkerchief.

He was an exceedingly tall and graceful personage, of that blue blood which marked high descent; golden-haired and fair-skinned, with hands as small and white as a woman's; his lips were delicate, but thin, and compressed closely at the corners of the mouth; and his pale blue eye had a glassy dulness. In spite of his beauty and his carriage, Amyas shrank from him instinctively; and yet he could not help holding out his hand in return, as the Spaniard, holding out his, said languidly in most sweet and sonorous Spanish—

“ I kiss his hands and feet. The Señor speaks, I am told, my native tongue ? ”

“ I have that honour.”

“ Then accept in it (for I can better express myself therein than in English, though I am not altogether ignorant of that witty and learned language) the expression of my pleasure at having fallen into the hands of one so renowned in war and travel ; and of one also,” he added, glancing at Amyas's giant bulk, “ the vastness of whose strength, beyond that of common mortality, makes it no more shame for me to have been overpowered and carried away by him than if my captor had been a paladin of Charlemagne's.”

Honest Amyas bowed and stammered, a little thrown off his balance by the unexpected assurance and cool flattery of his prisoner; but he said—

“ If you are satisfied, illustrious Señor, I am bound to be so. I only trust that in my hurry and the darkness, I have not hurt you unnecessarily.”

The Don laughed a pretty little hollow laugh : “ No, kind Señor, my head, I trust, will after a few days have become united to my shoulders; and, for the present, your company will make me forget any slight discomfort.”

How long this interchange of solemn compliments would have gone on, I know not : but at that moment Raleigh entered hastily—

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"My Lord, they have hung out a white flag, and are calling for a parley!"

"I am very sorry to hear it. Would to Heaven they had simply fought it out!" said Lord Grey, half to himself; and then, "Go, Captain Raleigh, and answer them that (saving this gentleman's presence) the laws of war forbid a parley with any who are leagued with rebels against their lawful sovereign."

"But what if they wish to treat for this gentleman's ransom?"

"For their own, more likely," said the Spaniard; "but tell them, on my part, Señor, that Don Guzman refuses to be ransomed; and will return to no camp where the commanding officer, unable to infect his captains with his own cowardice, dishonours them against their will."

"You speak sharply, Señor," said Winter, after Raleigh had gone out.

"I have reason, Señor Admiral, as you will find, I fear, ere long."

As Amyas came out on the battery, Yeo hailed him—

"Master Amyas! Hillo, sir! For the love of Heaven tell me!"

"What then?"

"Is his Lordship staunch? Will he do the Lord's work faithfully, root and branch: or will he spare the Amalekites?"

"The latter, I think, old hip-and-thigh," said Amyas, hurrying forward to hear the news from Raleigh, who appeared in sight once more.

"They ask to depart with bag and baggage," said he, when he came up.

"God do so to me, and more also, if they carry away a straw!" said Lord Grey. "Make short work of it, sir!"

"I do not know how that will be, my Lord; as I came up a captain shouted to me off the walls that there were mutineers; and, denying that he surrendered, would have pulled down the flag of truce, but the soldiers beat him off."

"A house divided against itself will not stand long gentlemen. Tell them that I give no conditions. Gunners, if you see the white flag go down, open your fire."

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instantly. Captain Raleigh, we need your counsel here. Mr. Cary, will you be my herald this time ? ”

“ A better Protestant never went on a pleasanter errand, my Lord.”

So Cary went, and then ensued an argument, as to what should be done with the prisoners in case of a surrender.

The council of war which followed was both a sad and a stormy one. What was to be done with the enemy ? They already outnumbered the English ; and some fifteen hundred of Desmond's wild Irish hovered in the forests round, ready to side with the winning party, or even to attack the English at the least sign of vacillation or fear. They could not carry the Spaniards away with them, for they had neither shipping nor food, not even handcuffs enough for them ; and as Mackworth told Winter when he proposed it, the only plan was for him to make San Josepho a present of his ships, and swim home himself as he could. To turn loose in Ireland, as Captain Touch urged, on the other hand, seven hundred such monsters of lawlessness, cruelty, and lust, as Spanish and Italian free lances were in those days, was as fatal to their own safety as cruel to the wretched Irish. All the captains, without exception, followed on the same side. “ What was to be done, then ? ” asked Lord Grey impatiently. “ Would they have him murder them all in cold blood ? ” And for a while every man, knowing that it must come to that, dared not say it.

It was done. Right or wrong, it was done. The shrieks and curses had died away, and the Fort del Oro was a red shambles, which the soldiers were trying to cover from the sight of heaven and earth, by dragging the bodies into the ditch, and covering them with the ruins of the rampart ; while the Irish, who had beheld from the woods that awful warning, fled trembling into the deepest recesses of the forest. It was done ; and it never needed to be done again. The hint was severe but it was sufficient. Many years passed before a Spaniard set foot again in Ireland.

The Spanish and Italian officers were spared, and Amyas had Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto duly adjudged to him, as his prize by right of

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war. The next question was, where to bestow Don Guzman till his ransom should arrive ; and as Amyas could not well deliver the gallant Don into the safe custody of Mrs. Leigh at Burrough, and still less into that of Frank at Court, he was fain to write to Sir Richard Grenville, and ask his advice, and in the meanwhile keep the Spaniard with him upon parole. But one morning Raleigh entered—

“ I have done you a good turn, Leigh, if you think it one. I have talked St. Leger into making you my lieutenant, and giving you the custody of a right pleasant hermitage—some castle Shackatory or other in the midst of a big bog, where time will run swift and smooth with you, between hunting wild Irish, snaring snipes, and drinking yourself drunk with usquebaugh over a turf fire.” •

“ I’ll go,” quoth Amyas; “ anything for work.” So he went and took possession of his lieutenancy and his black robber tower, and there passed the rest of the winter, fighting or hunting all day, and chatting and reading all the evening, with Señor Don Guzman, who, like a good soldier of fortune, made himself thoroughly at home, and a general favourite with the soldiers.

Don Guzman was a most finished gentleman; and told many a good story of the Indies, and told it well; and over and above his stories, he had among his baggage two books,—the one, Antonio Galvano’s *Discoveries of the World*, a mine of winter evening amusement to Amyas; and the other, a manuscript book, which, perhaps, it had been well for Amyas had he never seen. For it was none other than a sort of rough journal which Don Guzman had kept as a lad, when he went down with the Adelantado Gonzales Ximenes de Casada, from Peru to the River of Amazons, to look for the golden country of El Dorado, and the city of Manoa, which stands in the midst of the White Lake, and equals or surpasses in glory even the palace of the Inca Huaynacapac; “ all the vessels of whose house and kitchen are of gold and silver, and in his wardrobe statues of gold which seemed giants, and figures in proportion and bigness of all the beasts, birds, trees, and herbs of the earth, and the fishes of the water; and ropes, budgets, chests, and troughs of gold.”

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Now the greater part of this treasure was hidden by the Indians when Pizarro conquered Peru and slew Atahualpa, son of Huaynacapac; at whose death, it was said, one of the Inca's younger brothers fled out of Peru, and taking with him a great army, vanquished all that tract which lieth between the great rivers of Amazons and Baraquan, otherwise called Maranon and Orenoque.

There he sits to this day, beside the golden lake, in the golden city, which is in breadth a three days' journey, covered, he and his court, with gold dust from head to foot, waiting for the fulfilment of the ancient prophecy which was written in the temple of Caxamarca, where his ancestors worshipped of old; that heroes shall come out of the West, and lead him back across the forests to the kingdom of Peru, and restore him to the glory of his forefathers.

Golden phantom ! so possible, so probable, to imaginations which were yet reeling before the actual and veritable prodigies of Peru, Mexico, and the East Indies.

At last came a letter from Sir Richard Grenvile, complimenting Amyas on his success and promotion, bearing a long and courtly message to Don Guzman (whom Grenvile had known when he was in the Mediterranean, at the battle of Lepanto), and offering to receive him as his own guest at Bideford, till his ransom should arrive; a proposition which the Spaniard (who of course was getting sufficiently tired of the Irish bogs) could not but gladly accept; and one of Winter's ships, returning to England in the spring of 1581, delivered duly at the quay of Bideford the body of Don Guzman Maria Magdalena; and Amyas was left alone with the snipes and yellow mantles for two more weary years.

CHAPTER X

DON GUZMAN settled down quietly enough at Bideford on his parole, in better quarters than he had occupied for many a day, and took things as they came, like a true soldier of fortune; till, after he had been with Grenville hardly a month, old Salterne the mayor came to supper.

At the end of supper, Salterne asked Grenville to do his humble roof the honour, etc., etc., of supping with him the next evening, and then turning to the Don, said quite frankly, that he knew how great a condescension it would be on the part of a nobleman of Spain to sit at the board of a simple merchant : but that if the Spaniard deigned to do him such a favour, he would find that the cheer was fit enough for any rank, whatsoever the company might be; which invitation Don Guzman graciously condescended to accept.

And there, of course, he had it all his own way, and ruled the roost (which he was fond enough of doing) right royally, not only on account of his rank, but because he had something to say worth hearing, as a travelled man; and as Don Guzman talked with his new friends, he soon saw (for he was shrewd enough) that they belonged to a race which must be exterminated if Spain intended to become (as she did intend) the mistress of the world. He saw it, and his countrymen saw it too; and therefore the Spanish Armada came : but of that hereafter. And Don Guzman knew also, by hard experience, that these same islanders, who sat in Salterne's parlour, talking broad Devon through their noses, were no mere counters of money and hucksters of goods : but men who, though they thoroughly hated fighting, and loved making money instead, could fight, upon occasion, after a very dogged and terrible fashion, as well as the bluest blood in Spain. And one evening he waxed quite mad, when, after having civilly enough hinted that if Englishmen came where they had no right to come, they might find themselves sent back again, he was answered by a volley of—

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"We'll see that, sir."

"Depends on who says 'No right.'"

"You found might right," said another, "when you claimed the Indian seas; we may find right might when we try them."

"You are insolent burghers," said Don Guzman, and rose to go.

"Sir," said old Salterne, "as you say, we are burghers and plain men, and some of us have forgotten ourselves a little, perhaps; we must beg you to forgive our want of manners, and to put it down to the strength of my wine; for insolent we never meant to be, especially to a noble gentleman and a foreigner."

But the Don would not be pacified; and walked out, calling himself an ass and a blinkard for having demeaned himself to such a company, forgetting that he had brought it on himself.

Salterne (prompted by the great devil, Mammon) came up to him next day, and begged pardon again; promising, moreover, that none of those who had been so rude should be henceforth asked to meet him, if he would deign to honour his house once more. And the Don actually was appeased, and went there the very next evening, sneering at himself the whole time for going.

"Fool that I am! that girl has bewitched me, I believe. Go I must, and eat my share of dirt, for her sake."

So he went; and, cunningly enough, hinted to old Salterne that he had taken such a fancy to him, and felt so bound by his courtesy and hospitality, that he might not object to tell him things which he would not mention to every one; for that the Spaniards were not jealous of single traders, but of any general attempt to deprive them of their hard-earned wealth; that, however, in the meanwhile, there were plenty of opportunities for one man here and there to enrich himself, etc.

Old Salterne, shrewd as he was, had his weak point, and the Spaniard had touched it; and delighted at this opportunity of learning the mysteries of the Spanish monopoly, he often actually set Rose on to draw out the Don, without a fear (so blind does money make men) lest she might herself be drawn in. And so it came to pass, that for weeks and months the merchant's house was the Don's

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favourite haunt, and he saw the Rose of Torridge daily, and the Rose of Torridge heard him.

And as for her, poor child, she had never seen such a man. He had, or seemed to have, all the high-bred grace of Frank, and yet he was cast in a manlier mould ; he had just enough of his nation's proud self-assertion to make a woman bow before him as before a superior, and yet tact enough to let it very seldom degenerate into that boastfulness of which the Spaniards were then so often and so justly accused. He had marvels to tell by flood and field, as many and more than Amyas ; and he told them with a grace and an eloquence of which modest, simple Amyas possessed nothing.

He had shared, as a lad, in the horrors of the memorable siege of Famagusta, and had escaped, he hardly knew himself how, from the hands of the victorious Turks, and from the certainty (if he escaped being flayed alive or impaled, as most of the captive officers were) of ending his life as a Janissary at the Sultan's court. He had been at the battle of the Three Kings ; had seen Stukely borne down by a hundred lances, unconquered even in death ; and had held upon his knee the head of the dying King of Portugal.

And now, as he said to Rose one evening, what had he left on earth, but a heart trampled as hard as the pavement ? Whom had he to love ? Who loved him ? He had nothing for which to live but fame : and even that was denied to him, a prisoner in a foreign land.

Don Guzman, of course, intended to be pitied, and pitied he was accordingly. What need of more words ? Before a year was out, Rose Salterne was far more in love with Don Guzman than he with her ; and both suspected each other's mind, though neither hinted at the truth ; she from fear, and he, to tell the truth, from sheer Spanish pride of blood.

CHAPTER XI

IT is the spring of 1582-3. The grey March skies are curdling hard and high above black mountain peaks. The keen March wind is sweeping harsh and dry across a dreary sheet of bog, still red and yellow with the stains of winter frost.

Along the brink of the bog, picking their road among crumbling rocks and green spongy springs, a company of English soldiers are pushing fast, clad cap-à-pie in helmet and quilted jerkin, with arquebus on shoulder, and pikes trailing behind them; stern steadfast men, who, two years since, were working the guns at Smerwick fort, and have since then seen many a terrible fray, and shall see more before they die. Two captains ride before them on shaggy ponies, the taller in armour, stained and rusted with many a storm and fray, the other in brilliant inlaid cuirass and helmet, gaudy sash and plume, and sword-hilt glittering with gold, a quaint contrast enough to the meagre horse which carries him and his finery. Beside them, secured by a cord which a pikeman has fastened to his own wrist, trots a bare-legged Irish kerne, whose only clothing is his ragged yellow mantle, and the unkempt "glib" of hair, through which his eyes peer out, right and left, in mingled fear and sullenness. He is the guide of the company in their hunt after the rebel Baltinglâs; and woe to him if he play them false!

"A pleasant country, truly, Captain Raleigh," says the dingy officer to the gay one. "I wonder how, having once escaped from it to Whitehall, you have the courage to come back and spoil that gay suit with bog-water and mud."

"A very pleasant country, my friend Amyas; what you say in jest, I say in earnest."

"Hillo! Our tastes have changed places. I am sick of it already, as you foretold. Would Heaven that I could hear of some adventure Westward-ho! and find these big bones swinging in a hammock once more. Pray what has made you so suddenly in love with bog and rock,

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that you come back to tramp them with us ? I thought you had spied out the nakedness of the land long ago."

" Bog and rock ? Nakedness of the land ? What is needed here but prudence and skill, justice and law ? This soil, see, is fat enough, if men were here to till it. These rocks—who knows what minerals they may hold ? Tut, man ! if her gracious Majesty would but bestow on me some few square miles of this same wilderness, in seven years' time I would make it blossom like the rose, by God's good help."

" It is sword and bullet, I think, that are needed here, before plough and harrow. Until a few more of these Irish lords are gone where the Desmonds are, there is no peace for Ireland."

" Humph ! not so far wrong, I fear. And yet—Irish lords ? • These very traitors are better English blood than we who hunt them down. When Yeo here slew the Desmond the other day, he no more let out a drop of Irish blood, than if he had slain the Lord Deputy himself ! "

" His blood be on his own head," said Yeo. " He looked as wild a savage as the worst of them, more shame to him ; and the Ancient here had nigh cut off his arm before he told us who he was ; and then, your worship, having a price upon his head, and like to bleed to death too——"

" Enough, enough, good fellow," said Raleigh. " Thou hast done what was given thee to do. Leigh, what noise was that ? "

" An Irish howl, I fancied : but it came from off the bog ; it may be only a plover's cry."

" Something not quite right, Sir Captain, to my mind," said the Ancient. " They have ugly stories here of pucks and banshees, and what not of ghosts. There it was again, wailing just like a woman."

" Shamus, my man," said Amyas to the guide, " do you hear that cry in the bog ? "

The guide put on the most stolid of faces, and answered in broken English—

" Shamus hear nought. Perhaps—what you call him ? —fishing in ta pool."

" An otter, he means, and I believe he is right. Stay, no ! Did you not hear it then, Shamus ? It was a woman's voice."

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"He may shame me, sir, but he will never frighten me," quoth Yeo; "but the bog, Captains?"

"Tut! Devonshire men, and heath-trotters born, and not know our way over a peat moor?"

And the three strode away.

They splashed and scrambled for some quarter of a mile to the knoll, while the cry became louder and louder as they neared.

"That's neither ghost nor otter, sirs, but a true Irish howl, as Captain Leigh said; and I'll warrant Master Shamus knew as much long ago," said Yeo.

And in fact, they could now hear plainly the "Ochone, Ochonorie" of some wild woman; and, scrambling over the boulders of the knoll, in another minute came full upon her.

She was a young girl, sluttish and unkempt, of course, but fair enough: her only covering, as usual, was the ample yellow mantle. There she sat upon a stone, tearing her black dishevelled hair, and every now and then throwing up her head, and bursting into a long mournful cry.

On her knees lay the head of a man of middle age in the long soutane of a Romish priest. One look at the attitude of his limbs told them that he was dead.

Raleigh went gently to the girl, and spoke to her in English. She looked up at him, his armour and his plume, with wide and wondering eyes, and then shook her head, and returned to her lamentation.

Raleigh gently laid his hand on her arm, and lifted her up, while Yeo and Amyas bent over the corpse.

"Ask her who it is. Yeo, you know a little Irish," said Amyas.

He asked, but the girl made no answer. "The stubborn jade won't tell, of course, sir. If she were but a man, I'd make her soon enough."

"Ask her who killed him."

"No one, she says; and I believe she says true, for I can find no wound. The man has been starved, sirs, as I am a sinful man. God help him, though he is a priest; and yet he seems full enough down below. What's here? A big pouch, sirs, stuffed full of somewhat."

"Hand it hither."

The two opened the pouch; papers, papers, but no scrap of food. Then a parchment. They unrolled it.

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"Latin," said Amyas; "you must construe, Don Scholar."

"Is it possible?" said Raleigh, after reading a moment. "This is indeed a prize! This is Saunders himself!"

Yeo sprang up from the body as if he had touched an adder. "Nick Saunders the Legacy, sir?"

"Nicholas Saunders, the Legate."

"The villain! why did not he wait for me to have the comfort of killing him? Dog!" and he kicked the corpse with his foot.

"Quiet! quiet! Remember the poor girl," said Amyas, as she shrieked at the profanation, while Raleigh went on, half to himself. "Yes, this is Saunders. Misguided fool, and this is the end! To this thou hast come with thy plotting and thy conspiring, thy lying and thy boasting. What is that in his hand, Amyas? Give it me. A pastoral epistle to the Earl of Ormond, and all nobles of the realm of Ireland; 'To all who groan beneath tyranny, etc., Nicholas Saunders, by the grace of God, Legate, etc.' Bah!"

He ran his eye through various other documents, written in the usual strain: full of huge promises from the Pope and the king of Spain; then, with a gesture of disgust, he crammed the papers back again into the pouch. Taking it with them, they walked back to the company, and then remounting, marched away once more, and the girl was left alone with the dead.

An hour had passed, when another Englishman was standing by the wailing maid, and round him a dozen shock-headed kernes, javelin in hand, were tossing about their tawny rags, and adding their lamentations to those of the lonely watcher.

The Englishman was Eustace Leigh; a layman still, but still at his old work. By two years of intrigue and labour from one end of Ireland to the other, he had been trying to satisfy his conscience for rejecting "the higher calling" of the celibate; for mad hopes still lurked within that fiery heart. His brow was wrinkled now; his features harshened; the scar upon his face, and the slight distortion which accompanied it, was hidden by a bushy beard from all but himself; and he never forgot it for a day, nor forgot who had given it to him.

He had been with Desmond, wandering in moor and

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moss for many a month in danger of his life; and now he was on his way to James Fitz-Eustace, Lord Baltinglas, to bring him the news of Desmond's death; and with him a remnant of the clan, who were either too stout-hearted, or too desperately stained with crime, to seek peace from the English, and, as their fellows did, find it at once and freely.

There Eustace stood, looking down on all that was left of the most sacred personage of Ireland; the man who, as he once had hoped, was to regenerate his native land, and bring the proud island of the West once more beneath that gentle yoke, in which united Christendom laboured for the commonweal of the universal Church.

The corpse was buried; a few prayers said hastily; and Eustace Leigh was away again, not now to find Baltinglas; for it was more than his life was worth. The girl had told him of the English soldiers who had passed, and he knew that they would reach the earl probably before he did. The game was up; all was lost. So he retraced his steps, as a desperate resource, to the last place where he would be looked for; and after a month of disguising, hiding, and other expedients, found himself again in his native county of Devon.

And now let us return to Raleigh and Amyas, as they jog along their weary road.

"Have you heard of my brother Humphrey's new project?" said Raleigh.

"How should I hear anything in this waste howling wilderness?"

"Kiss hands to the wilderness, then, and come with me to Newfoundland!"

"You to Newfoundland?"

"Yes. I to Newfoundland, unless my little matter here is settled at once. The Queen don't know it, and shan't till I'm off. She'd send me to the Tower, I think, if she caught me playing truant. I could hardly get leave to come hither; but I must out, and try my fortune. I am over ears in debt already, and sick of courts and courtiers. Humphrey must go next spring and take possession of his kingdom beyond seas, or his patent expires; and with him I go, and you too, my circumnavigating giant."

Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Raleigh's half-brother, held a

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patent for "planting" the lands of Newfoundland and "Meta Incognita" (Labrador). He had attempted a voyage thither with Raleigh in 1578, whereof I never could find any news, save that he came back again, after a heavy brush with some Spanish ships (in which his best captain, Mr. Morgan, was killed), having done nothing, and much impaired his own estate; but now he had collected a large sum; Sir Gilbert Peckham of London, Mr. Hayes of South Devon, and various other gentlemen, of whom more hereafter, had adventured their money; and a considerable colony was to be sent out the next year, with miners, assayers, and, what was more, Parmenius Budæus, Frank's old friend, who had come to England full of thirst to see the wonders of the New World; and over and above this, as Raleigh told Amyas in strictest secrecy, Adrian Gilbert, Humphrey's brother, was turning every stone at Court for a patent of discovery in the North-West; and this Newfoundland colony, though it was to produce gold, silver, merchandise, and what not, was but a basis of operations, a half-way house from whence to work out the North-West passage to the Indies.

Amyas, simple fellow, took all in greedily; and then he told Raleigh all that he had gathered from the Spaniard, concerning the golden city of Manoa; and Raleigh believed every word.

"Humph!" said he, after a long silence. "To find that golden Emperor; offer him help and friendship from the Queen of England; defend him against the Spaniards; if we became strong enough, conquer back all Peru from the tyrants, and reinstate him on the throne of the Incas, with ourselves for his bodyguard, as the Norman Varangians were to the effeminate emperors of Byzant—Hey, Amyas? You would make a gallant chieftain of Varangs. We'll do it, lad!"

"We'll try," said Amyas; "but we must be quick, for there's one Berreo sworn to carry out the quest to the death; and if the Spaniards once get thither, their plan of works will be much more like Pizarro's than like ours; and by the time we come, there will be neither gold nor city left."

"Nor Indians either, I'll warrant the butchers; but, lad, I am promised to Humphrey; I have a bark fitting out already, and all I have, and more, adventured in her; so Manoa must wait."

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“ It will wait well enough, if the Spaniards prosper no better on the Amazon than they have done; but must I come with you ? To tell the truth, I am quite shore-sick, and to sea I must go. What will my mother say ? ”

“ I'll manage thy mother,” said Raleigh; and so he did; for, to cut a long story short, he went back the month after, and so impressed on that good lady the enormous profits and honours to be derived from *Meta Incognita*, and (which was most true) the advantage to any young man of sailing with such a general as Humphrey Gilbert, that she consented to Amyas's adventuring in the voyage some two hundred pounds which had come to him as his share of prize-money, after the ever-memorable circumnavigation. For Mrs. Leigh, be it understood, was no longer at Burrough Court. By Frank's persuasion, she had let the old place, moved up to London with her eldest son, and taken for herself a lodging somewhere by Palace Stairs, which looked out upon the silver Thames (for Thames was silver then), with its busy ferries and gliding boats, across to the pleasant fields of Lambeth, and the Archbishop's Palace, and the wooded Surrey hills; and there she spent her peaceful days, close to her Frank and to the Court.

Amyas went to Plymouth (with Yeo, of course, at his heels), and there beheld, for the first time, the majestic countenance of the philosopher of Compton Castle. He lodged with Drake, and found him not over-sanguine as to the success of the voyage.

However, the die was cast, and the little fleet of five sail assembled in Cawsand Bay. Amyas was to go as a gentleman adventurer on board of Raleigh's bark; Raleigh himself, however, at the eleventh hour, had been forbidden by the Queen to leave England. Some say that he came down to Plymouth, accompanied the fleet a day's sail to sea, and would have given her Majesty the slip, and gone with them Westward-ho, but for Sir Humphrey's advice. It is likely enough: but I cannot find evidence for it. At all events, on the 11th June the fleet sailed out, having, says Mr. Hayes, “ in number about two hundred and sixty men, among whom we had of every faculty good choice, as shipwrights, masons, carpenters, smiths, and suchlike, requisite for such an action; also mineral men and refiners ”—an armament, in short, complete in all but men. The sailors had been picked up hastily and any-

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where, and soon proved themselves a mutinous, and, in the case of the bark *Swallow*, a piratical set. The mechanics were little better. The gentlemen adventurers, puffed up with vain hopes of finding a new Mexico, became soon disappointed and surly at the hard practical reality; while over all was the head of a sage and an enthusiast, a man too noble to suspect others, and too pure to make allowances for poor human weaknesses. He had got his scheme perfect upon paper; well for him, and for his company, if he had asked Francis Drake to translate it for him into fact ! As early as the second day, the seeds of failure began to sprout above ground. The men of Raleigh's bark, the *Vice-Admiral*, suddenly found themselves seized, or supposed themselves seized, with a contagious sickness, and at midnight forsook the fleet, and went back to Plymouth; whereto Mr. Hayes can only say, "The reason I never could understand. Sure I am that Mr. Raleigh spared no cost in setting them forth. And so I leave it unto God !"

But Amyas said more. He told Butler the captain plainly that, if the bark went back, he would not; that he had seen enough of ships deserting their consorts; that it should never be said of him that he had followed Winter's example, and that, too, on a fair easterly wind; and finally that he had seen Doughty hanged for trying to play such a trick, and that he might see others hanged too before he died. Whereon Captain Butler offered to draw and fight, to which Amyas showed no repugnance; whereon the captain, having taken a second look at Amyas's thews and sinews, reconsidered the matter, and offered to put Amyas on board of Sir Humphrey's *Delight*, if he could find a crew to row him.

Amyas looked around.

"Are there any of Sir Francis Drake's men on board ?"

"Three, sir," said Yeo. "Robert Drew, and two others."

"*Pelicans !*" roared Amyas, "you have been round the world, and will you turn back from Westward-ho ?"

There was a moment's silence, and then Drew came forward.

"Lower us a boat, captain, and lend us a caliver to make signals with, while I get my kit on deck; I'll after

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Captain Leigh, if I row him aboard all alone to my own hands."

"If ever I command a ship, I will not forget you," said Amyas.

"Nor us either, sir, we hope; for we haven't forgotten you and your honest conditions," said both the other *Pelicans*; and so away over the side went all the five, and pulled away after the admiral's lantern, firing shots at intervals as signals. Luckily for the five desperadoes, the night was all but calm. They got on board, before the morning, and so away into the boundless West.

CHAPTER XII

EVERY one who knows Bideford cannot but know Bideford Bridge; for it is the very centre and soul around which the town, as a body, has organized itself; and as Edinburgh is Edinburgh by virtue of its castle, Rome Rome by virtue of its capitol, and Egypt Egypt by virtue of its Pyramids, so is Bideford Bideford by virtue of its bridge. But all do not know the occult powers which have advanced and animated the said wondrous bridge for now five hundred years, and made it the chief wonder, according to Prince and Fuller,* of this fair land of Devon; being first an inspired bridge; a soul-saving bridge; an alms-giving bridge; an educational bridge; a sentient bridge; and last, but not least, a dinner-giving bridge.

To one of these dinners, as it happened, were invited in the year 1583 all the notabilities of Bideford, and beside them Mr. St. Leger of Annery close by, brother of the Marshal of Munster, and of Lady Grenville; a most worthy and hospitable gentleman. Between him and one of the bridge trustees arose an argument, whether a salmon caught below the bridge was better or worse than one caught above; and as that weighty question could only be decided by practical experiment, Mr. St. Leger vowed that as the bridge had given him a good dinner, he would give the bridge one; offered a bet of five pounds that he would find them, out of the pool below Annery, as firm and flaky a salmon as the Appledore one which they had just eaten; and then, in the fulness of his heart, invited the whole company present to dine with him at Annery three days after, and bring with them each a wife or daughter; and Don Guzman being at table, he was invited too.

So there was a mighty feast in the great hall at Annery; and while every one was eating their best and drinking their worst, Rose Salterne and Don Guzman were pretending not to see each other, and watching each other all the more. But Rose, at least, had to be very careful of her glances; for not only was her father at the table, but just

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opposite her sat none other than Messrs. William Cary and Arthur St. Leger, lieutenants in her Majesty's Irish army, who had returned on furlough a few days before.

Rose Salterne and the Spaniard had not exchanged a word in the last six months, though they had met many times. The cunning Don had found himself foiled in his first tactic; and he was now trying another, and a far more formidable one. He would put a high price on himself, and pique her pride, as she was too much accustomed to worship, to be won by flattering it.

It was a beautiful sight, the great terrace at Annery that afternoon; with the smart dames in their gaudy dresses parading up and down in twos and threes before the stately house; or looking down upon the park with the old oaks, and the deer, and the broad land-locked river spread out like a lake beneath. All chatted, and laughed, and eyed each others' dresses, and gossiped about each other's husbands and servants: only Rose Salterne kept apart, and longed to get into a corner and laugh or cry, she knew not which.

"Our pretty Rose seems sad," said Lady Grenville, coming up to her. "Cheer up, child! we want you to come and sing to us."

Rose answered she knew not what, and obeyed mechanically.

She took the lute, and sat down on a bench beneath the house, while the rest grouped themselves round her.

"What shall I sing?"

"Let us have your old song, 'Lord Haldan's Daughter.'"

Rose shrank from it. It was a loud and dashing ballad, which chimed in but little with her thoughts; and Frank had praised it too, in happier days long since gone by. She thought of him, and of others, and of her pride and carelessness; and the song seemed ominous to her: and yet for that very reason she dared not refuse to sing it, for fear of suspicion where no one suspected.

As she ceased, a measured voice, with a foreign accent, thrilled through her.

"In the East, they say the nightingale sings to the rose; Devon, more happy, has nightingale and Rose in one."

"We have no nightingales in Devon, Don Guzman," said Lady Grenville; "but our little forest thrushes sing,

as you hear, sweetly enough to content any ear. But what brings you away from the gentlemen so early ? ”

“ These letters,” said he, “ which have just been put into my hand; and as they call me home to Spain, I was loth to lose a moment of that delightful company from which I must part so soon.”

“ To Spain ? ” asked half a dozen voices : for the Don was a general favourite.

“ Yes, and thence to the Indies. My ransom has arrived, and with it the promise of an office. I am to be Governor of La Guayra in Caraccas. Congratulate me on my promotion.”

“ And where is La Guayra ? ”

“ Half round the world, on the coast of the Spanish Main. The loveliest place on earth, and the loveliest governor’s house, in a forest of palms at the foot of a mountain eight thousand feet high : I shall only want a wife there to be in paradise.”

“ I don’t doubt that you may persuade some fair lady of Seville to accompany you thither,” said Lady Grenville.

“ Thanks, gracious Madam : but the truth is, that since I have had the bliss of knowing English ladies, I have begun to think that they are the only ones on earth worth wooing.”

Now Don Guzman had been talking at Rose Salterne, and giving her the very slightest hint, every now and then, that he was talking at her; till the poor girl’s face was almost crimson with pleasure. But in the meanwhile, as it was ordained, Cary could see and hear through the window of the hall a good deal of what was going on.

“ How that Spanish crocodile ogles the Rose ! ” whispered he to young St. Leger.

“ What wonder ? He is not the first by many a one.”

“ Ay—but— By heaven, she is making side-shots at him with those languishing eyes of hers, the little baggage ! ”

“ What wonder ? He is not the first, say I, and won’t be the last. Pass the wine, man.”

“ I have had enough; between sack and singing, my head is as mazed as a dizzy sheep. Let me slip out.”

“ Not yet, man; remember you are bound for one song more.”

So Cary, against his will, sat and sang another song; and

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in the meanwhile the party had broken up, and wandered away by twos and threes, among trim gardens and pleasaunces, and clipped yew-walks.

At last Cary got away and out; sober, but just enough flushed with wine to be ready for any quarrel; and luckily for him, had not gone twenty yards along the great terrace before he met Lady Grenville.

"Has your Ladyship seen Don Guzman?"

"Yes—why, where is he? He was with me not ten minutes ago. You know he is going back to Spain."

"Going! Has his ransom come?"

"Yes, and with it a governorship in the Indies."

"Governorship! Much good may it do the governed."

"Why not, then? He is surely a most gallant gentleman."

"Gallant enough—yes," said Cary carelessly. "I must find him, and congratulate him on his honours."

"I will help you to find him," said Lady Grenville, whose woman's eye and ear had already suspected something. "Escort me, sir."

"It is but too great an honour to squire the Queen of Bideford," said Cary, offering his hand.

"If I am your queen, sir, I must be obeyed," answered she in a meaning tone. Cary took the hint, and went on chattering cheerfully enough.

But Don Guzman was not to be found in garden or in pleasaunce.

"Perhaps," at last said a burgher's wife, with a toss of her head, "your Ladyship may meet with him at Hankford's oak!"

"At Hankford's oak! what should take him there?"

"Pleasant company, I reckon" (with another toss).

"I heard him and Mistress Salterne talking about the oak just now."

Cary turned pale and drew in his breath.

"Very likely," said Lady Grenville quietly. "Will you walk with me so far, Mr. Cary?"

"To the world's end, if your Ladyship condescends so far." So they went down past the herds of deer, by a trim-kept path into the lonely dell where stood the fatal oak; and Cary grasped Lady Grenville's hand so tightly that she gave a little shriek of pain.

"There they are!" whispered he, heedless of her;

and pointed to the oak, where, half hidden by the tall fern, stood Rose and the Spaniard.

Her head was on his bosom. She seemed sobbing, trembling; he talking earnestly and passionately; but Lady Grenville's little shriek made them both look up. To turn and try to escape was to confess all; and the two, collecting themselves instantly, walked towards her, Rose wishing herself fathoms deep beneath the earth.

Cary bit his lip, and bowed courteously to the Don.

"I have to congratulate you, I hear, Señor, on your approaching departure."

"I kiss your hands, Señor, in return; but I question whether it be a matter of congratulation, considering all that I leave behind."

"So do I," answered Cary bluntly enough, and the four walked back to the house, Lady Grenville taking everything for granted with the most charming good humour, and chatting to her three silent companions till they gained the terrace once more, and found four or five of the gentlemen, with Sir Richard at their head, proceeding to the bowling-green.

Lady Grenville, in an agony of fear about the quarrel which she knew must come, would have gladly whispered five words to her husband: but she dared not do it before the Spaniard, and dreaded, too, a faint or a scream from Rose, whose father was of the party. So she walked on with her fair prisoner, commanding Cary to escort them in, and the Spaniard to go to the bowling-green.

Cary obeyed: but he gave her the slip the moment she was inside the door, and then darted off to the gentlemen.

His heart was on fire: all his old passion for Rose had flashed up again at the sight of her with a lover;—and that lover a Spaniard! He would cut his throat for him, if steel could do it! Only he recollected that Salterne was there, and shrank from exposing Rose; and shrank, too, as every gentleman should, from making a public quarrel in another man's house. Never mind. Where there was a will there was a way. He could get him into a corner, and quarrel with him privately about the cut of his beard, or the colour of his ribbon. So in he went; and, luckily or unluckily, found standing together apart from the rest, Sir Richard, the Don, and young St. Leger.

"Well, Don Guzman, you have given us wine-bibbers

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the slip this afternoon. I hope you have been well employed in the meanwhile ? ”

“ Delightfully to myself, Señor,” said the Don, who, enraged at being interrupted, if not discovered, was as ready to fight as Cary, but disliked, of course, an explosion as much as he did; “ and to others, I doubt not.”

“ So the ladies say,” quoth St. Leger. “ He has been making them all cry with one of his stories, and robbing us meanwhile of the pleasure we had hoped for from some of his Spanish songs.”

“ The devil take Spanish songs ! ” said Cary in a low voice, but loud enough for the Spaniard. Don Guzman clapt his hand on his sword-hilt instantly.

“ Lieutenant Cary,” said Sir Richard in a stern voice, “ the wine has surely made you forget yourself ! ”

“ As sober as yourself, most worshipful knight; but if you want a Spanish song, here’s one; and a very scurvy one it is, like its subject—

“ Don Desperado
Walked on the Prado,
And there he met his enemy.
He pulled out a knife, a,
And let out his life, a,
And fled for his own across the sea.”

And he bowed low to the Spaniard.

The insult was too gross to require any spluttering.

“ Señor Cary, we meet ? ”

“ I thank your quick apprehension, Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto. When, where, and with what weapons ? ”

“ I should have preferred a horse and pistols,” said Don Guzman after a moment. half to himself, and in Spanish; “ they make surer work of it than bodkins; but ” (with a sigh and one of his smiles) “ beggars must not be choosers.”

“ The best horse in my stable is at your service, Señor,” said Sir Richard Grenville instantly.

“ And in mine also, Señor,” said Cary; “ and I shall be happy to allow you a week to train him, if he does not answer at first to a Spanish hand.”

“ You forget in your courtesy, gentle sir, that the insult being with me, the time lies with me also. We wipe it off to-morrow morning with simple rapiers and daggers. Who is your second ? ”

“ Mr. Arthur St. Leger here, Señor : who is yours ? ”

The Spaniard felt himself alone in the world for one moment; and then answered, with another of his smiles—

“ Your nation possesses the soul of honour. He who fights an Englishman needs no second.”

“ And he who fights among Englishmen will always find one,” said Sir Richard. “ I am the fittest second for my guest.”

“ You only add one more obligation, illustrious cavalier, to a two-years’ prodigality of favours, which I shall never be able to repay.”

“ Very well,” said Cary. “ Rapiers and shirts at three to-morrow morning—Is that the bill of fare ? Ask Sir Richard where, Atty. It is against punctilio now for me to speak to him till after I am killed.”

“ On the sands opposite. The tide will be out at three. And now, gallant gentlemen, let us join the bowlers.”

Three o’clock, upon a still pure bright midsummer morning. A broad and yellow sheet of ribbed tide-sands, through which the shallow river wanders from one hill-foot to the other, whispering round dark knolls of rock, and under low tree-fringed cliffs, and banks of golden broom.

Glorious day, glorious place, “ bridal of earth and sky,” decked well with bridal garlands, bridal perfumes, bridal songs,—What do those four cloaked figures there by the river brink, a dark spot on the fair face of the summer morn?

Yet one is as cheerful as if he too, like all nature round him, were going to a wedding; and that is Will Cary. He has been bathing down below to cool his brain and steady his hand; and he intends to stop Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto’s wooing for ever and a day. The Spaniard is in a very different mood; fierce and haggard, he is pacing up and down the sand. He intends to kill Will Cary; but then ? Will he be the nearer to Rose by doing so ? Can he stay in Bideford ? Will she go with him ? Shall he stoop to stain his family by marrying a burgher’s daughter ?

Sir Richard Grenville too is in no very pleasant humour, as St. Leger soon discovers, when the two seconds begin whispering over their arrangements.

“ We cannot have either of them killed, Arthur.”

“ Mr. Cary swears he will kill the Spaniard, sir.”

“ He shan’t. The Spaniard is my guest. I am answer-

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able for him to Leigh, and for his ransom too. And how can Leigh accept the ransom if the man is not given up safe and sound ? They won't pay for a dead carcass, boy ! The man's life is worth two hundred pounds."

"A very bad bargain, sir, for those who pay the said two hundred for the rascal ; but what if he kills Cary ?"

"Worse still. Cary must not be killed. I am very angry with him, but he is too good a lad to be lost ; and his father would never forgive us. We must strike up their swords at the first scratch."

"It will make them very mad, sir."

"Hang them ! let them fight us then, if they don't like our counsel. It must be, Arthur."

"Be sure, sir," said Arthur, "that whatsoever you shall command I shall perform."

Sir Richard smiles, and says—"Now gentlemen ! are you ready ?"

Cloaks and doublets are tossed off, the men placed, the rapiers measured hilt and point ; Sir Richard and St. Leger place themselves right and left of the combatants, facing each other, the points of their drawn swords on the sand. Cary and the Spaniard stand for a moment quite upright, their sword-arms stretched straight before them, holding the long rapier horizontally, the left hand clutching the dagger close to their breasts. So they stand eye to eye, with clenched teeth and pale crushed lips, while men might count a score ; St. Leger can hear the beating of his own heart ; Sir Richard is praying inwardly that no life may be lost. Suddenly there is a quick turn of Cary's wrist and a leap forward. The Spaniard's dagger flashes, and the rapier is turned aside ; Cary springs six feet back as the Spaniard rushes on him in turn. Parry, thrust, parry—the steel rattles, the sparks fly, the men breathe fierce and loud.

Five minutes have the two had instant death a short six inches off from those wild sinful hearts of theirs, and not a scratch has been given. Yes ! the Spaniard's rapier passes under Cary's left arm ; he bleeds.

"A hit ! a hit ! Strike up, Atty !" and the swords are struck up instantly.

Cary, nettled by the smart, tries to close with his foe, but the seconds cross their swords before him.

"It is enough, gentlemen. Don Guzman's honour is satisfied !"

"But not my revenge, Señor," says the Spaniard, with a frown. "This duel is to the death, on my part; and, I believe, on Mr. Cary's also."

"By heaven, it is !" says Will, trying to push past. "Let me go, Arthur St. Leger; one of us must down. Let me go, I say !"

"If you stir, Mr. Cary, you have to do with Richard Grenville !" thunders the lion voice. "I am angry enough with you for having brought on this duel at all. Don't provoke me still further, young hothead !"

So Cary is led off sulking, and Sir Richard turns to the Spaniard,—

"And now, Don Guzman, allow me, though much against my will, to speak to you as a friend to a friend. You will pardon me if I say that I cannot but have seen last night's devotion to——"

"You will be pleased, Señor, not to mention the name of any lady to whom I may have shown devotion. I am not accustomed to have my little affairs talked over by any unbidden counsellors."

"Well, Señor, if you take offence, you take that which is not given. You forget that I am your host."

"And do you suppose that you have therefore a right to insult me? Stand on your guard, sir !"

Grenville answered by slapping his own rapier home into the sheath with a quiet smile.

"Señor Don Guzman must be well enough aware of who Richard Grenville is, to know that he may claim the right of refusing duel to any man, if he shall so think fit."

"Sir !" cried the Spaniard with an oath, "this is too much ! Do you dare to hint that I am unworthy of your sword? I have blood royal in my veins, and you dare to refuse my challenge ?"

"Richard Grenville can show quarterings, probably, against even Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto, or against (with no offence to the unquestioned nobility of your pedigree) the bluest blood of Spain. But he can show, moreover, thank God, a reputation which raises him as much above the imputation of cowardice, as it does above that of discourtesy. If you think fit, Señor, to forget what you have just, in very excusable anger,

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vented, and to return with me, you will find me still, as ever, your most faithful servant and host. If otherwise, you have only to name whither you wish your mails to be sent, and I shall, with unfeigned sorrow, obey your commands concerning them."

The Spaniard, bowing stiffly, answered, "To the nearest tavern, Señor," and then strode away. His baggage was sent thither. He took a boat down to Appledore that very afternoon, and vanished, none knew whither.

CHAPTER XIII

“So you see, my dear Mrs. Hawkins, having the silver, as your own eyes show you, beside the ores of lead, manganese, and copper, and above all this gossan (as the Cornish call it), which I suspect to be not merely the matrix of the ore, but also the very crude form and *materia prima* of all metals—you mark me?—If my recipes, which I had from Doctor Dee, succeed only half so well as I expect, then I refine out the Luna, the silver, lay it by, and transmute the remaining ores into Sol, gold. Whereupon Peru and Mexico become superfluities, and England the mistress of the globe. Strange, no doubt; distant, no doubt: but possible, my dear madam, possible!”

“And what good to you if it be, Mr. Gilbert? If you could find a philosopher’s stone to turn sinners into saints, now;—but nought save God’s grace can do that: and that last seems ofttimes over long in coming.” And Mrs. Hawkins sighed.

The two interlocutors in this dialogue were sitting in a low oak-panelled room in Plymouth town, handsomely enough furnished, adorned with carving and gilding and coats of arms, and noteworthy for many strange knick-nacks, Spanish gold and silver on the sideboard; strange birds and skins, and charts and rough drawings of coast which hung about the room. The gentleman was a tall fair man, with a broad and lofty forehead, wrinkled with study, and eyes weakened by long poring over the crucible and the furnace. The lady had once been comely enough: but she was aged and worn, as sailors’ wives are apt to be, by many sorrows.

“You always remind me, madam, of my dear Mrs. Leigh of Burrough, and her counsels.”

“Do you see her often? I hear of her as one of the Lord’s most precious vessels.”

“I would have done more ere now than see her,” said he with a blush, “had she allowed me: but she lives only for the memory of her husband and the fame of her noble sons.”

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As he spoke the door opened, and in walked, wrapped in his rough sea-gown, none other than one of those said noble sons.

Adrian turned pale.

"Amyas Leigh ! What brings you hither ? How fares my brother ? Where is the ship ?"

"Your brother is well, Mr. Gilbert. The *Golden Hind* is gone on to Dartmouth, with Mr. Hayes. I came ashore here, meaning to go north to Bideford, ere I went to London. I called at Drake's just now, but he was away."

"The *Golden Hind* ? What brings her home so soon ?"

"Yet welcome ever, sir," said Mrs. Hawkins. "This is a great surprise, though. Captain John did not look for you till next year."

Amyas was silent.

"Something is wrong !" cried Adrian. "Speak !"

Amyas tried, but could not.

"Will you drive a man mad, sir ? Has the adventure failed ? You said my brother was well."

"He is with the God whom he served."

"He was always with Him, like Enoch : parable me no parables, if you love me, sir !"

"And, like Enoch, he was not ; for God took him."

Adrian clasped his hands over his forehead, and leaned against the table.

"Go on, sir, go on. God will give me strength to hear all."

And gradually Amyas opened to Adrian that tragic story, which Mr. Hayes has long ago told far too well to allow a second edition of it from me : of the unruliness of the men, ruffians as I said before, caught up at haphazard ; of conspiracies to carry off the ships, plunder of fishing vessels, desertions multiplying daily ; licences from the General to the lazy and fearful to return home ; till Adrian broke out with a groan—

"From him ? Conspired against him ? Deserted from him ? Dotards, buzzards ! Where would they have found such another leader ?"

"Your illustrious brother, sir," said Amyas, "if you will pardon me, was a very great philosopher, but not so much of a general."

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“General, sir ? Where was a braver man ? ”

“Not on God’s earth : but that does not make a general, sir. If Cortes had been brave and no more, Mexico would have been Mexico still. The truth is, sir, Cortes, like my Captain Drake, knew when to hang a man ; and your great brother did not.”

Adrian rose, and begged leave to retire ; he must collect himself.

“Poor gentleman ! ” said Mrs. Hawkins ; “it is little else he has left to collect.”

“Or I either,” said Amyas. “I was going to ask you to lend me one of your son’s shirts, and five pounds to get myself and my men home.”

“Five ? Fifty, Mr. Leigh ! God forbid that John Hawkins’s wife should refuse her last penny to a distressed mariner, and he a gentleman born. But you must eat and drink.”

“It’s more than I have done for many a day worth speaking of.”

And Amyas sat down in his rags to a good supper, while Mrs. Hawkins told him all the news which she could of his mother, whom Adrian Gilbert had seen a few months before in London ; and then went on, naturally enough, to the Bideford news.

“And by the bye, Captain Leigh, I’ve sad news for you from your place ; and I had it from one who was there at the time. You must know a Spanish captain, a prisoner——”

“What ; the one I sent home from Smerwick ? ”

“You sent ? Mercy on us ! Then, perhaps you’ve heard——”

“How can I have heard ? What ? ”

“That he’s gone off, the villain ! ”

“Without paying his ransom ? ”

“I can’t say that ; but there’s a poor innocent young maid gone off with him, one Salterne’s daughter—the serpent.”

“Rose Salterne, the mayor’s daughter, the Rose of Torridge ! ”

“That’s her. Bless you, dear soul, what ails you ? ”

Amyas had dropped back in his seat as if he had been shot ; but he recovered himself before kind Mrs. Hawkins could rush to the cupboard for cordials.

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“ You’ll forgive me, madam; but I’m weak from the sea; and your good ale has turned me a bit dizzy, I think.”

“ Ay, yes, ’tis too, too heavy, till you’ve been on shore a while. Try the aqua vitæ; my Captain John has it right good; and a bit too fond of it too, poor dear soul, between-whiles, Heaven forgive him ! ”

And so she poured some strong brandy and water down Amyas’s throat, in spite of his refusals, and sent him to bed, but not to sleep; and after a night of tossing, he started for Bideford, having obtained the means for so doing from Mrs. Hawkins.

CHAPTER XIV

Now I am sorry to say, for the honour of my country, that it was by no means a safe thing in those days to travel from Plymouth to the north of Devon; because, to get to your journey's end, unless you were minded to make a circuit of many miles, you must needs pass through the territory of a foreign and hostile potentate, who had many times ravaged the dominions and defeated the forces of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, and was named (behind his back at least) the King of the Gubbings.

Amyas, in fear of these same Scythians and heathens, rode out of Plymouth on a right good horse, in his full suit of armour, carrying lance and sword, and over and above two great dags, or horse-pistols; and behind him Salvation Yeo, and five or six North Devon men (who had served with him in Ireland, and were returning on furlough), clad in head-pieces and quilted jerkins, each man with his pike and sword, and Yeo with arquebuse and match, while two sumpter ponies carried the baggage of this formidable troop.

They pushed on as fast as they could, through Tavistock, to reach before nightfall Lydford, where they meant to sleep; but what with buying the horses, and other delays, they had not been able to start before noon; and night fell just as they reached the frontiers of the enemy's country. A dreary place enough it was, by the wild glare of sunset: a high table-land of heath, banked on the right by the crags and hills of Dartmoor, and sloping away to the south and west towards the foot of the great cone of Brent-Tor, which towered up like an extinct volcano (as some say that it really is), crowned with a tiny church. Far away, down those waste slopes, they could see the tiny threads of blue smoke rising from the dens of the Gubbings; and more than once they called a halt, to examine whether distant furze-bushes and ponies might not be the patrols of an advancing army.

On the middle of the down stood a wayside inn; a desolate and villainous-looking lump of lichen-spotted

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granite, with windows paper-patched, and rotting thatch kept down by stones and straw-banks. At the door, rapt apparently in the contemplation of the mountain peaks, which glowed rich orange in the last lingering sun-rays, but really watching which way the sheep on the moor were taking, stood the innkeeper, a brawny, sodden-visaged, blear-eyed six feet of brutishness, holding up his hose with one hand, for want of points, and clawing with the other his elf-locks.

Presently he spies Amyas and his party coming slowly over the hill, pricks up his ears, and counts them; sees Amyas's armour; shakes his head and grunts; and then, being a man of few words, utters a sleepy howl—

“ Mirooi—Fushing pooale ! ”

A strapping lass brings out his fishing-rod and basket, and the man, having tied up his hose with some ends of string, examines the footlink.

“ Don vlies gone ! ”

“ May be,” says Mary; “ shouldn't hav' left mun out to court. May be old hen's ate mun off. I see her chocking about a while ago.”

The host receives this intelligence with an oath, and replies by a violent blow at Mary's head, which she, accustomed to such slight matters, dodges, and then returns the blow with good effect on the shock head.

Whereon mine host, equally accustomed to such slight matters, quietly shambles off, howling as he departs—

“ Tell patrico ! ”

Mary runs in, combs her hair, slips a pair of stockings and her best gown over her dirt, and awaits the coming guests, who make a few long faces at the “ mucksy sort of a place,” but prefer to spend the night here than to bivouac close to the enemy's camp.

So the old hen who has swallowed the dun fly is killed, plucked, and roasted, and certain “ black Dartmoor mut-ton ” is put on the gridiron, and being compelled to confess the truth by that fiery torment, proclaims itself to all noses as red-deer venison. In the meanwhile Amyas has put his horse and the ponies into a shed, to which he can find neither lock nor key, and therefore returns grumbling, not without fear for his steed's safety. The baggage is heaped in a corner of the room, and Amyas stretches his legs before a turf fire; while Yeo, who has his notions

about the place, posts himself at the door, and the men are seized with a desire to superintend the cooking, probably to be attributed to the fact that Mary is cook.

Presently Yeo comes in again.

"There's a gentleman just coming up, sir, all alone."

"Ask him to make one of our party, then, with my compliments." Yeo goes out, and returns in five minutes.

"Please sir, he's gone in back ways by the court."

"Well, he has an odd taste, if he makes himself at home here."

Out goes Yeo again, and comes back once more after five minutes, in high excitement.

"Come out, sir; for goodness' sake come out. I've got him. Safe as a rat in a trap, I have !"

"Who ?"

"A Jesuit, sir."

"Nonsense, man !"

"I tell you truth, sir. I went round the house, for I didn't like the looks of him as he came up. I knew he was one of them villains the minute he came up, by the way he turned in his toes, and put down his feet so still and careful, like as if he was afraid of offending God at every step. And he slips quite still to the stable, and peeps in, and when he sees no one in there he goes, and out I go, and shut-to the door, and back a cart that was there up against it, and call out one of the men to watch the stable, and the girl's crying like mad."

"What a fool's trick, man ! How do you know that he is not some honest gentleman, after all ?"

Amyas ran out, pulled back the cart grumbling; opened the door, and began a string of apologies to—his cousin Eustace.

Neither cousin spoke for a minute or two. At last Amyas—

"Well, cousin hide-and-seek, how long have you added horse-stealing to your other trades ?"

"My dear Amyas," said Eustace very meekly, "I may surely go into an inn stable without intending to steal what is in it."

"Of course, old fellow," said Amyas, mollified, "I was only in jest ; and now come in and eat with me ; supper's just ready, and bygones shall be bygones, if you will have them so."

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How much forgiveness Eustace felt in his heart, I know not; but he knew, of course, that he ought to forgive; and to go in and eat with Amyas was to perform an act of forgiveness, and for the best of motives, too, for by it the cause of the Church might be furthered; and acts and motives being correct, what more was needed? So in he went. They talked away over the venison, guardedly enough at first; but as they went on, Amyas's straightforward kindliness warmed poor Eustace's frozen heart; and ere they were aware, they found themselves talking over old haunts and old passages of their boyhood—uncles, aunts and cousins; and Eustace, without any sinister intention, asked Amyas why he was going to Bideford while Frank and his mother were in London.

"To tell you the truth, I cannot rest till I have heard the whole story about poor Rose Salterne."

"What about her?" cried Eustace.

"Do you not know?"

"How should I know anything here? For Heaven's sake what has happened?"

Amyas told him, wondering at his eagerness, for he had never had the least suspicion of Eustace's love.

Eustace shrieked aloud.

"Fool, fool that I have been! Caught in my own trap! Villain, villain that he is! After all he promised me at Lundy."

Amyas sat thunderstruck.

"Oh, Eustace! And you then loved her, too?"

"Don't speak to me. Loved her? Yes, sir, and had as good a right to love her as any one of your precious Brotherhood of the Rose. Don't speak to me I say, or I shall do you a mischief."

So Eustace knew of the brotherhood too! Amyas longed to ask him how; but what use in that? If he knew it, he knew it; and what harm? So he only answered—

"My good cousin, why be wroth with me? If you really love her, now is the time to take counsel with me how best we shall——"

Eustace did not let him finish his sentence.

"How best we shall do what, my valiant cousin?" said he in a meaning and half-scornful voice. "What does your most chivalrous Brotherhood of the Rose purpose in such a case?"

Amyas, a little nettled, stood on his guard in return, and answered bluntly—

“What the Brotherhood of the Rose will do, I can’t yet say. What it ought to do, I have a pretty sure guess.”

“So have I. To hunt her down as you would an outlaw, because forsooth she has dared to love a Catholic; to murder her lover in her arms, and drag her home again stained with his blood, to be forced by threats and persecution to renounce that Church into whose maternal bosom she has doubtless long since found rest and holiness ! ”

“If she has found holiness, it matters little to me where she has found it, Master Eustace : but that is the very point that I should be glad to know for certain.”

“And you will go and discover for yourself ? ”

“Have you no wish to discover it also ? ”

“And if I had, what would that be to you ? ”

“Only,” said Amyas, trying hard to keep his temper, “that if we had the same purpose, we might sail in the same ship.”

“You intend to sail then ? ”

“I mean simply, that we might work together.”

“Our paths lie on very different roads, sir ! ”

“I am afraid you never spoke a truer word, sir. In the meanwhile, ere we part, be so kind as to tell me what you meant by saying that you had met this Spaniard at Lundy ? ”

“I shall refuse to answer that.”

“You will please to recollect, Eustace, that however good friends we have been for the last half-hour, you are in my power. I have a right to know the bottom of this matter; and, by Heaven, I will know it.”

“In your power ? See that you are not in mine ! Remember, sir, that you are within a—within a few miles, at least, of those who will obey me, their Catholic benefactor: but who owe no allegiance to those Protestant authorities who have left them to the lot of the beasts which perish.”

Amyas was very angry. He wanted but little more to make him catch Eustace by the shoulders, shake the life out of him, and deliver him into the tender guardianship of Yeo; but he knew that to take him at all was to bring

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certain death on him, and disgrace on the family; and he kept himself down. Whereon Eustace vanished.

It was about midnight when Amyas leapt to his feet, or rather fell upon his back, under the notion that ten thousand flying dragons were bursting in the window close to his ear, with howls most fierce and fell. The flying dragons passed, however, being only a flock of terror-stricken geese, which flew flapping and screaming round the corner of the house; but the noise which had startled them did not pass; and another minute made it evident that a sharp fight was going on in the courtyard, and that Yeo was hallooing lustily for help.

Out turned the men, sword in hand, burst the back-door open, stumbling over pails and pitchers, and into the courtyard, where Yeo, his back against the stable-door, was holding his own manfully with sword and buckler against a dozen men.

As Amyas rushed into the yard, the whole party of ruffians took to their heels, and vanished over a low hedge at the other end of the yard.

"Are you hurt, Yeo?"

"Not a scratch, thank Heaven! But I've got two of them, the ringleaders, I have. One of them's against the wall. Your horse did for t'other."

The wounded man was lifted up; a huge ruffian, nearly as big as Amyas himself. Yeo's sword had passed through his body. He groaned and choked for breath.

"Carry him indoors. Where is the other?"

"Dead as a herring, in the straw. Have a care, men, have a care how you go in! the horses are near mad!"

However, the man was brought out after a while. With him all was over. They could feel neither pulse nor breath.

"Carry him in, too, poor wretch. And now, Yeo, what is the meaning of all this?"

Yeo's story was soon told. He could not get out of his Puritan head the notion (quite unfounded, of course) that Eustace had meant to steal the horses. He had seen the innkeeper sneak off at their approach; and expecting some night-attack, he had taken up his lodging for the night in the stable.

As he expected, an attempt was made. The door w

opened (how, he could not guess, for he had fastened it inside), and two fellows came in, and began to loose the beasts. Yeo's account was, that he seized the big fellow, who drew a knife on him, and broke loose; the horses, terrified at the scuffle, kicked right and left; one man fell, and the other ran out, calling for help, with Yeo at his heels; "Whereon," said Yeo, "seeing a dozen more on me with clubs and bows, I thought best to shorten the number while I could, ran the rascal through, and stood on my guard, and only just in time I was, what's more; there's two arrows in the house wall, and two or three more in my buckler, which I caught up as I went out."

But hardly had they stumbled through the low doorway into the back-kitchen when a fresh hubbub arose inside—more shouts for help. Amyas ran forward, breaking his head against the doorway, and beheld, as soon as he could see for the flashes in his eyes, an old acquaintance, held on each side by a sturdy sailor.

With one arm in the sleeve of his doublet, and the other in a not over-spotless shirt; holding up his hose with one hand, and with the other a candle, whereby he had lighted himself to his own confusion; foaming with rage, stood Mr. Evan Morgans, *alias* Father Parsons, looking, between his confused habiliments, and his fiery visage (as Yeo told him to his face), "the very moral of a half-plucked turkey-cock." And behind him, dressed, stood Eustace Leigh.

"We found the maid letting these here two out by the front door," said one of the captors.

"Well, Mr. Parsons," said Amyas; "and what are you about here? A pretty nest of thieves and Jesuits we seem to have routed out this evening."

"About my calling, sir," said Parsons stoutly. "By your leave, I shall prepare this my wounded lamb for that account to which your man's cruelty has untimely sent him."

The wounded man, who lay upon the floor, heard Parsons' voice, and moaned for the "Patrico."

"You see, sir," said Parsons, pompously, "the sheep know their shepherd's voice."

"The wolves you mean, you hypocritical scoundrel!" said Amyas, who could not contain his disgust. "Let the fellow truss up his points, lads, and do his work. After all, the man is dying."

It was so. The dark catalogue of brutal deeds had been

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gasped out; but ere the words of absolution could follow, the head had fallen back, and all was over.

"The Lord have mercy on his soul!" said Eustace.

"His soul is lost before our very eyes," said Yeo.

"Mind your own business," said Amyas.

"Humph; but I'll tell you sir, what our business is, if you'll step aside with me. I find that poor fellow that lies dead is none other than the leader of the Gubbings; the king of them, as they dare to call him."

"Well, what of that?"

"Mark my words, sir, if we have not a hundred stout rogues upon us before two hours are out; forgive us they never will; and if we get off with our lives, which I don't much expect, we shall leave our horses behind."

"We had better march at once, then."

"Think, sir; if they catch us up—as they are sure to do, knowing the country better than we—how will our shot stand their arrows?"

"True, old wisdom; we must keep the road, and we must keep together; and so be a mark for them, while they will be behind every rock and bank; and two or three flights of arrows will do our business for us. Humph! stay, I have a plan." And stepping forward he spoke—

"Eustace, you will be so kind as to go back to your lambs; and tell them, that if they meddle with us cruel wolves again to-night, we are ready and willing to fight to the death, and have plenty of shot and powder at their service. Father Parsons, you will be so kind as to accompany us; it is but fitting that the shepherd should be hostage for his sheep."

"If you carry me off this spot, sir, you carry my corpse only," said Parsons. "I may as well die here as be hanged elsewhere, like my martyred brother Campian."

"If you take him, you must take me, too," said Eustace.

"What if we won't?"

"How will you gain by that? you can only leave me here. You cannot make me go to the Gubbings, if I do not choose."

"Well, then; if you, Eustace, will go and give my message to your converts, I will promise to set Mr. Parsons free again before we come to Lydford town; and I advise you, if you have any regard for his life, to see that your eloquence be persuasive enough; for as sure as I am at

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Englishman, and he none, if the Gubbings attack us, the first bullet that I shall fire at them will have gone through his scoundrelly brains."

Parsons still kicked.

"Very well, then, my merry men all. Tie this gentleman's hands behind his back, get the horses out, and we'll right away up into Dartmoor, find a good high tor, stand our ground there till morning, and then carry him into Okehampton to the nearest justice. If he chooses to delay me in my journey, it is fair that I should make him pay for it."

Whereon Parsons gave in, and being fast tied by his arm to Amyas's saddle, trudged alongside his horse, for several weary miles, while Yeo walked by his side, like a friar by a condemned criminal; and in order to keep up his spirits, told him the woeful end of Nicholas Saunders the Legate, and how he was found starved to death in a bog.

"Cast the fellow off now," said Amyas, when the party came in sight of the old tower of Lydford Castle.

Leaving on their left Lydford, Amyas and his party trudged on through the mire till sunrise; and ere the vapours had lifted from the mountain tops, they rode into the ugly, dirty, and stupid town of Okehampton. And heartily did Amyas abuse the old town that day; for he was detained there, as he expected, full three hours while the Justice Shallow of the place was sent for from his farm (whither he had gone at sunrise, after the early-rising fashion of those days) to take Yeo's deposition concerning last night's affray. Moreover, when Shallow came, he refused to take the depositions, because they ought to have been made before a brother Shallow at Lydford; and in the wrangling which ensued, was very near finding out what Amyas (fearing fresh loss of time and worse evils beside) had commanded to be concealed, namely, the presence of Jesuits in that Moorland Utopia.

So Amyas went on a long and weary day's journey, till he saw at last beneath him the broad shining river, and the long bridge, and the white houses piled up the hillside; and beyond, over Ralceigh downs, the dear old tower of Northam Church.

Alas! Northam was altogether a desert to him then; and Bideford, as it turned out, hardly less so. For when

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he rode up to Sir Richard's door, he found that the good knight was still in Ireland, and Lady Grenville at Stow. Whereupon he rode back again down the High Street to that same bay-windowed Ship Tavern where the Brotherhood of the Rose made their vow, and settled himself in the very room where they had supped.

"Ah! Mr. Leigh—Captain Leigh now, I beg pardon," quoth mine host. "Bideford is an empty place nowadays, and nothing stirring, sir."

"Fill my men's stomachs for them, and never mind mine. It's market-day, is it not? Send out and see whether Mr. Cary is still in town"; and Amyas strode out, and along the quay to Bridgeland Street, and knocked at Mr. Salterne's door.

Salterne himself opened it with his usual stern courtesy, and led Amyas into his parlour, calling to the apprentices to run one way, and to the cook to run another.

"You must not trouble yourself to get me supper, indeed."

"I must though, sir, and the best of wine, too; and old Salterne had a good tap of Alicant in old time, old time, old time, sir!" and you must drink it now, whether he does or not!" and out he bustled.

Amyas sat still, wondering what was coming next, and puzzled at the sudden hilarity of the man, as well as his hospitality.

"My dear sir," said Amyas, seeing the old man enter with a couple of bottles in each hand, "you don't mean us to drink all that wine?"

"Why not, sir?" answered Salterne, in a grim, half-sneering tone, thrusting out his square-grizzled beard and chin. "Why not, sir? why should I not make merry when I have the honour of a noble captain in my house? one who has sailed the seas, sir, and cut Spaniards' throats; and may cut them again too: eh, sir?"

And so he ran on all supper-time, hardly allowing Amyas to get a word in edgeways: but heaping him with coarse flattery, and urging him to drink, till after the cloth was drawn, and the two left alone, he grew so outrageous that Amyas was forced to take him to task good humouredly.

"Now, my dear sir, you have feasted me royally, and better far than I deserve: but why will you go about to

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make me drunk twice over, first with vainglory and then with wine ? ”

Salterne looked at him a while fixedly, and then, sticking out his chin—“ I’ll be plain with you, sir. You’ve heard how—how I’ve fared since you saw me last ? ”

Amyas nodded his head.

“ I thought so. Shame rides post. Now then, Captain Leigh, listen to me. I, being a plain man and a burgher, and one that never drew iron in my life except to mend a pen, ask you, being a gentleman and a captain and a man of honour, with a weapon to your side, and harness to your back—what would you do in my place ? ”

“ Humph ! ” said Amyas, “ that would very much depend on whether ‘ my place ’ was my own fault or not.”

“ And what if it were, sir ? What if all that the charitable folks of Bideford—(Heaven reward them for their tender mercies !)—have been telling you in the last hour be true, sir,—true ! and yet not half the truth ? ”

Amyas gave a start.

“ Ah, you shrink from me ! Of course a man is too righteous to forgive those who repent, though God is not.”

“ God knows, sir——”

“ Yes, sir, God does know—all ; and you shall know a little—as much as I can tell—or you understand. Come upstairs with me, sir, as you’ll drink no more ; I have a liking for you. I have watched you from your boyhood, and I can trust you, and I’ll show you what I never showed to mortal man but one.”

And, taking up a candle, he led the way upstairs, while Amyas followed wonderingly.

He stopped at a door and unlocked it.

“ There, come in. Those shutters have not been opened since she——” and the old man was silent.

Amyas looked round the room. It was a low wainscoted room, such as one sees in old houses : everything was in the most perfect neatness. The snow-white sheets on the bed were turned down as if ready for an occupant. There were books arranged on the shelves, fresh flowers on the table ; the dressing-table had all its woman’s mundus of pins, and rings, and brushes ; even the dressing-gown lay over the chair-back. Everything was evidently just as it had been left.

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"This was her room, sir," whispered the old man.

Amyas sighed.

"I sweep it out myself every morning, and keep all tidy. See here!" and he pulled open a drawer. "Here are all her gowns, and there are her hoods; and there—I know 'em all by heart now, and the place of every one. And there, sir——"

And he opened a cupboard, where lay in rows all Rose's dolls, and the worn-out playthings of her childhood.

"And now," he whispered, "one thing more. Look here!" and pulling out a key, he unlocked a chest, and lifted up tray after tray of necklaces and jewels, furs, lawns, cloth of gold. "Look there! Two thousand pound won't buy that chest.

"And whom do you think I kept all these things for? These were for her wedding-day—for her wedding-day. For your wedding-day, if you'd been minded, sir! Never mind! Come downstairs and finish your wine. I see you don't care about it all. Why should you? you are not her father, and you may thank God you are not. Go, and be merry while you can, young sir! . . . And yet, all this might have been yours. And—but I don't suppose you are one to be won by money—but all this may be yours still, and twenty thousand pounds to boot."

"I want no money, sir, but what I can earn with my own sword."

"Earn my money, then."

"What on earth do you want with me?"

"You can cut that fellow's throat."

"It will take a long arm to reach him."

"I suppose it is as easy to sail to the Spanish Main as it was to sail round the world."

"My good sir," said Amyas, "I have at this moment no more worldly goods than my clothes and my sword; so how to sail to the Spanish Main I don't quite see."

"And do you suppose, sir, that I should hint to you of such a voyage if I meant you to be at the charge of it? No, sir; if you want two thousand pounds, or five, to fit a ship, take it! Take it, sir! I hoarded money for my child: and now I will spend it to avenge her."

Amyas was silent for a while; the old man still held his arm, still looked up steadfastly and fiercely in his face.

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"Bring me home that man's head, and take ship, prizes—all ! Keep the gain, sir, and give me the revenge !"

"Gain ? Do you think I need bribing, sir ? What kept me silent was the thought of my mother : I dare not go without her leave."

Salterne made a gesture of impatience.

"I dare not, sir ; I must obey my parent, whatever else I do."

"Humph !" said he. "If others had obeyed theirs as well !—But you are right, Captain Leigh, right. You will prosper whoever else does not. Now, sir, good-night, if you will let me be the first to say so. My old eyes grow heavy early nowadays. Perhaps it's old age, perhaps it's sorrow."

So Amyas departed to the inn, and there, to his great joy, found Cary waiting for him, from whom he learned details, which must be kept for another chapter, and which I shall tell, for convenience' sake, in my own words, and not in his.

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CHAPTER XV

ABOUT six weeks after the duel, the miller at Stow had come up to the great house in much tribulation, to borrow the bloodhounds. Rose Salterne had vanished in the night, no man knew whither.

The facts of the case were, that all Rose's trinkets were left behind, so that she had at least gone off honestly; and nothing seemed to be missing but some of her linen, which old Anthony the steward broadly hinted was likely to be found in other people's boxes. The only trace was a little footmark under her bedroom window. On that the bloodhound was laid (of course in leash), and after a premonitory whimper, lifted up its mighty voice, and started bell-mouthed through the garden gate, and up the lane, towing behind him the panting keeper, till they reached the downs above, and went straight away for Marsland Mouth, where the whole *posse comitatus* pulled up breathless at the door of Lucy Passmore.

Lucy, as perhaps I should have said before, was now a widow, and found her widowhood not altogether contrary to her interest. Her augury about her old man had been fulfilled; he had never returned since the night on which he put to sea with Eustace and the Jesuits.

But now—what had she to do with Rose's disappearance? and, indeed, where was she herself? Her door was fast; and round it her flock of goats stood, crying in vain for her to come and milk them; while from the down above, her donkeys, wandering at their own sweet will, answered the bay of the bloodhound with a burst of harmony.

They attacked the cottage, and by a general vote, ransacked the little dwelling, partly in indignation, and partly, if the truth be told, in the hope of plunder: but plunder there was none. The goats and donkeys were driven off up to Stow; and the mob returned, a little ashamed of themselves when their brief wrath was past; and a little afraid, too, of what Sir Richard might say.

A few days afterwards, Sir Richard, on his way from Bideford to Stow, looked in at Clovelly Court, and mentioned, with a "by the bye," news which made Will

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Cary leap from his seat almost to the ceiling. What it was we know already.

"And there is no clue?" asked old Cary; for his son was speechless.

"Only this; I hear that some fellow prowling about the cliffs that night saw a pinnace running from Lundy."

Will rose, and went hastily out of the room.

In half an hour, he and three or four armed servants were on board a trawling skiff, and away to Lundy. He did not return for three days, and then brought news: that an elderly man, seemingly a foreigner, had been lodging for some months past in a part of the ruined Moresco Castle, which was tenanted by one John Braund; that a few weeks since a younger man, a foreigner also, had joined him from on board a ship: the ship a *Flushing*, or *Easterling* of some sort. The ship came and went more than once; and the young man in her. A few days since, a lady and her maid, a stout woman, came with him up to the castle, and talked with the elder man a long while in secret; abode there all night; and then all three sailed in the morning.

Poor Will wrote off to Frank at Whitehall, telling him the whole truth; to which he received an answer, in which Frank said that he, as a Brother of the *Rose*, was bound to believe, nay, to assert at the sword's point if need were, that the incomparable *Rose of Torridge* could make none but a worthy and virtuous choice; and that to the man whom she had honoured by her affection was due on their part, Spaniard and Papist though he might be, all friendship, worship, and loyal faith for evermore.

And there the matter dropped for a few days, till one came forward who had no mind to let it drop, and that was Jack Brimblecombe, now curate of Hartland town, and "passing rich on forty pounds a year."

"I hope no offence, Mr. William; but when are you and the rest going after—after her?" The name stuck in his throat.

Cary was taken aback.

"What's that to thee?" asked he, trying to laugh it off.

"What? Don't laugh at me, sir, for it's no laughing matter. We swore our oaths, Mr. Cary; and oaths are oaths, say I."

"Of course, Jack, of course; but to go to look for her—

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and when we've found her, cut her lover's throat. Absurd, Jack, even if she were worth looking for, or his throat worth cutting. Tut, tut, tut——"

But Jack looked steadfastly in his face, and after some silence—

"How far is it to the Caraccas, then, sir?"

"What is that to thee, man?"

"Why, he was made governor thereof, I hear; so that would be the place to find her?"

"You don't mean to go thither to seek her?" shouted Cary, forcing a laugh.

"That depends on whether I can go, sir; but if I can scrape the money together, or get a berth on board some ship, why, God's will must be done."

Will looked at him, to see if he had been drinking, or gone mad; but the little pig's-eyes were both sane and sober.

"Well," said Jack, in his stupid, steadfast way, "it's a very bad look-out; but mother's pretty well off, if father dies, and the maidens are stout wenches enough, and will make tidy servants, please the Lord. And you'll see that they come to no harm, Mr. William, for old acquaintance' sake, if I never come back."

Cary was silent with amazement.

"And, Mr. William, you know me for an honest man, I hope. Will you lend me a five pound, and take my books in pawn for them, just to help me out?"

"Are you mad, or in a dream? You will never find her!"

"That's no reason why I shouldn't do my duty in looking for her, Mr. William."

"Jack," said Cary, "if this is your duty, it is others'."

"No, sir, I don't say that; you're a layman, but I am a deacon, and the chaplain of you all, and sworn to seek out Christ's sheep scattered up and down this naughty world, and that innocent lamb first of all."

"You have sheep at Hartland, Jack, already."

"There's plenty better than I will tend them, when I am gone; and none that will tend her, because none love her like I, and they won't venture. Who will? It can't be expected, and no shame to them!"

"I wonder what Amyas Leigh would say to all this, if he were at home?"

"Say? He'd do. He isn't one for talking. He'd go through fire and water for her, you trust him, Will Cary; and call me an ass if he won't."

"Will you wait, then, till he comes back, and ask him?"

"He may not be back for a year or more."

"Hear reason, Jack. If you will wait like a rational and patient man, instead of rushing blindfold on your ruin, something may be done. At least, you stay and dine here, old fellow."

Now a good dinner was (as we know) what Jack loved, and loved too oft in vain; so he submitted for the nonce, and Cary thought, ere he went, that he had talked him pretty well round. At least he went home, and was seen no more for a week.

But at the end of that time he returned, and said with a joyful voice—

"I have settled all, Mr. Will. The parson of Welcombe will serve my church for two Sundays, and I am away for London town, to speak to Mr. Frank."

"To London? How wilt get there?"

"On Shanks his mare," said Jack, pointing to his bandy legs. "But I expect I can get a lift on board of a coaster so far as Bristol, and it's no way on to signify, I hear."

Cary tried in vain to dissuade him; and then forced on him a small loan, with which away went Jack, and Cary heard no more of him for three weeks.

At last he walked into Clovelly Court again just before supper-time, thin and leg-weary, and sat himself down among the serving-men till Will appeared.

Will took him up above the salt, and made much of him (which indeed the honest fellow much needed), and after supper asked him in private how he had sped.

"I have learnt a lesson, Mr. William. I've learnt that there is one on earth loves her better than I, if she had but had the wit to have taken him."

"But what says he of going to seek her?"

"He says what I say, Go! and he says what you say, Wait."

And so Jack went home to his parish that very evening, weary as he was, in spite of all entreaties to pass the night at Clovelly. But he had left behind him thoughts in Cary's mind, which gave their owner no rest day or night till the touch of a seeming accident made them all start

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suddenly into shape, as a touch of the freezing water covers it in an instant with crystals of ice.

He was lounging (so he told Amyas) one murky day on Bideford quay, when up came Mr. Salterne. Cary had shunned him of late, partly from delicacy, partly from dislike of his supposed hard-heartedness. But this time they happened to meet full : and Cary could not pass without speaking to him.

" Well, Mr. Salterne, and how goes on the shipping trade ? "

" Well enough, sir, if some of you young gentlemen would but follow Mr. Leigh's example, and go forth to find us stay-at-homes new markets for our ware. "

" What ? you want to be rid of us, eh ? "

" I don't know why I should, sir. We shan't cross each other now, sir, whatever might have been once. But if I were you, I should be in the Indies, about now, if I were not fighting the Queen's battles nearer home. "

" In the Indies ? I should make but a poor hand of Drake's trade. ". And so the conversation dropped; but Cary did not forget the hint.

" So, lad, to make an end of a long story, " he said to Amyas; " if you are minded to take the old man's offer, so am I : and Westward-ho with you, come foul come fair. "

" It will be but a wild-goose chase, Will. "

" If she is with him, we shall find her at La Guayra. If she is not, and the villain has cast her off down the wind, that will be only an additional reason for making an example of him. "

" And if neither of them is there, Will, the Plate-fleets will be; so it will be our own shame if we come home empty-handed. "

" And if we go, we must needs take Jack Brimblecombe with us, or he will surely heave himself over Harty Point, and his ghost will haunt us to our dying day. "

" Jack shall go. None deserves it better. "

After which there was a long consultation on practical matters, and it was concluded that Amyas should go up to London and sound Frank and his mother before any further steps were taken.

CHAPTER XVI. 2449.

LET us take boat as Amyas did, at Whitehall-stairs, and slip down ahead of him under old London Bridge, and so to Deptford Creek, where remains, as it were embalmed, the famous ship *Pelican*, in which Drake had sailed round the world. There she stands, drawn up high and dry upon the sedgy bank of Thames, like an old warrior resting after his toil.

There she has remained since as a show, and moreover as a sort of dining-hall for jovial parties from the City; one of which would seem to be on board this afternoon, to judge from the flags which bedizen the masts, the sounds of revelry and savoury steams which issue from those windows which once were port-holes, and the rushing to and fro along the river brink, and across that lucky bridge, of white-aproned waiters from the neighbouring Pelican Inn. A great feast is evidently toward, for with those white-aproned waiters are gay serving-men, wearing on their shoulders the City badge. The Lord Mayor is giving a dinner to certain gentlemen of the Leicester House party, who are interested in foreign discoveries; and what place so fit for such a feast as the *Pelican* itself?

At the head of the table sits the Lord Mayor; whom all readers will recognise at once, for he is none other than that famous Sir Edward Osborn, clothworker, and ancestor of the Dukes of Leeds, whose romance nowadays is in every one's hands. There he sits, a right kingly man, with my lord Earl of Cumberland on his right hand, and Walter Raleigh on his left; the three talk together in a low voice on the chance of there being vast and rich countries still undiscovered between Florida and the River of Canada. Raleigh's half-scientific declamation, and his often quotations of Doctor Dee the conjurer, have less effect on Osborn than on Cumberland, and Raleigh is fain to call to his help the quiet student who sits on his left hand, Richard Hakluyt, of Oxford. But he is deep in talk with a reverend elder, whose long white beard flows almost to his waist; Anthony Jenkinson by

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name, the great Asiatic traveller, who is discoursing to the Christchurch virtuoso of reindeer sledges and Siberian steppes. Next to him is Christopher Carlile, a valiant captain, afterwards general of the soldiery in Drake's triumphant West Indian raid of 1585. He is now busy talking with Alderman Hart the grocer, Sheriff Spencer the clothworker, and Charles Leigh (Amyas's merchant cousin), and with Aldworth the Mayor of Bristol, and William Salterne, alderman thereof, and cousin of our friend of Bideford.

On the opposite side of the table is a group, scarcely less interesting. Martin Frobisher and John Davis, the pioneers of the North-West passage, are talking with Alderman Sanderson, the great geographer, and "setter forth of globes"; with Mr. Towerson, Sir Gilbert Peckham, our old acquaintance Captain John Winter, and last, but not least, with Philip Sidney himself, who, with his accustomed courtesy, has given up his rightful place toward the head of the table that he may have a knot of virtuosos all to himself; and has brought with him, of course, his two especial intimates, Mr. Edward Dyer and Mr. Francis Leigh. They too are talking of the North-West passage: and Sidney is lamenting that he is tied to diplomacy and courts, and expressing his envy of old Martin Frobisher in all sorts of pretty compliments; to which the other replies that—

"It's all very fine to talk of here, a sailing on dry land with a good glass of wine before you; but you'd find it another guess sort of business, knocking about among the icebergs with your beard frozen fast to your ruff, Sir Philip, specially if you were a bit squeamish about the stomach."

At this moment a waiter enters, and—

"Please my Lord Mayor's Worship, there is a tall gentleman outside would speak with the Right Honourable Sir Walter Raleigh."

"Show him in, man. Sir Walter's friends are ours."

Amyas enters, and stands hesitating in the doorway.

"Captain Leigh!" cry half a dozen voices.

"Why did you not walk in, sir?" says Osborne.

"You should know your way well enough between these decks."

"Well enough, my lords and gentlemen. But Sir

Walter—you will excuse me,”—and he gave Raleigh a look which was enough for his quick wit. Turning pale as death, he rose, and followed Amyas into an adjoining cabin. They were five minutes together; and then Amyas came out alone.

In a few words he told the company the sad story which we already know. Ere it was ended, noble tears were glistening on some of those stern faces, and the feast broke up sadly and hurriedly, while each man asked his neighbour, “What will the Queen say?”

Raleigh went out to call a wherry, beckoning Amyas to follow him. Sidney, Cumberland, and Frank went with them in another boat, leaving the two to talk over the sad details.

They disembarked at Whitehall-stairs; Raleigh, Sidney, and Cumberland went to the palace; and the two brothers to their mother’s lodgings.

They went upstairs; and it was a relief to both of them to find that their mother was at the Abbey; for it was for her sake that both dreaded what was coming. So they went out and stood in the bay-window which looked out upon the river, and talked of things indifferent, and looked earnestly at each other’s faces by the fading light, for it was now three years since they had met.

Years and events had deepened the contrast between the two brothers; and Frank smiled with affectionate pride as he looked up in Amyas’s face, and saw that he was no longer merely the rollicking handy sailor-lad, but the self-confident and stately warrior. Amyas looked anxiously into his brother’s face. It was changed, indeed, since they last met. The brilliant red was still on either cheek, but the white had become dull and opaque; the lips were pale, the features sharpened; the eyes glittered with unnatural fire: and when Frank told Amyas that he looked aged, Amyas could not help thinking that the remark was far more true of the speaker himself.

Trying to shut his eyes to the palpable truth, he went on with his chat, asking the names of one building after another.

“And so this is old Father Thames, with his bank of palaces?”

“Yes. His banks are stately enough: yet, you see,

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he cannot stay to look at them. He hurries down to the sea; and the sea into the ocean; and the ocean Westward-ho, for ever. All things move Westward-ho. Perhaps we may move that way ourselves some day, Amyas. But I must tell you now, I suppose, once and for all. That has happened at Bideford which——”

“ Spare us both, Frank; I know all. I came through Bideford on my way hither; and came hither not merely to see you and my mother, but to ask your advice and her permission.”

“ True heart ! noble heart ! ” cried Frank. “ I knew you would be staunch ! ”

“ Westward-ho it is, then ? ”

“ Can we escape ? ”

“ We ? ”

“ Amyas, docs not that which binds you bind me ? ”

Amyas started back, and held Frank by the shoulders at arm's length; as he did so, he could feel, through, that his brother's arms were but skin and bone.

“ But, Frank,—my mother ? ”

“ My mother knows all; and would not have us unworthy of her.”

“ Impossible ! She will never give you up ! ”

“ All things are possible to them that believe in God, my brother; and she believes. But, indeed, Doctor Dee, the wise man, gave her but this summer I know not what of prognostics and diagnostics concerning me. I am born, it seems, under a cold and watery planet, and need, if I am to be long-lived, to go nearer to the vivifying heat of the sun, and there bask out my little life like fly on wall. To tell truth, he has bidden me spend no more winters here in the East; but return to our native sea-breezes, there to warm my frozen lungs. I must go, Amyas. It is not merely that my heart pants, as Sidney's does, as every gallant's ought, to make one of your noble choir of Argonauts, who are now replenishing the earth and subduing it for God and for the Queen; it is not merely, Amyas, that love calls me—love tyrannous and uncontrollable, strengthened by absence, and deepened by despair; but honour, Amyas—my oath——”

And he paused for lack of breath, and bursting into a violent fit of coughing, leaned on his brother's shoulder while Amyas cried—

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"Fools, fools that we were—that I was, I mean—to take that fantastical vow ! "

"Not so," answered a gentle voice from behind : "you vowed for the sake of peace on earth, and goodwill toward men, and 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.' No, my sons, be sure that such self-sacrifice as you have shown will meet its full reward at the hand of Him who sacrificed Himself for you."

"Oh mother ! mother !" said Amyas, "and do you not hate the very sight of me—come here to take away your first-born ? "

"My boy, God takes him, and not you."

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So mother and sons returned to Bideford, and set to work. Frank mortgaged a farm : Will Cary did the same (having some land of his own from his mother). Old Salterne grumbled at any man save himself spending a penny on the voyage, and forced on the adventurers a good ship of two hundred tons burden, and five hundred pounds toward fitting her out ; Mrs. Leigh worked day and night at clothes and comforts of every kind ; Amyas had nothing to give but his time and his brains : but, as Salterne said, the rest would have been of little use without them ; and day after day he and the old merchant were on board the ship, superintending with their own eyes the fitting of every rope and nail. Cary went about beating up recruits ; and made, with his jests, and his frankness, the best of crimps : while John Brimblecombe, beside himself with joy, toddled about after him from tavern to tavern, and quay to quay, exalted for the time being (as Cary told him) into a second Peter the Hermit ; and so fiercely did he preach a crusade against the Spaniards, through Bideford and Appledore, Clovelly and Ilfracombe, that Amyas might have had a hundred and fifty loose fellows in the first fortnight. But he knew better : still smarting from the effects of a similar haste in the Newfoundland adventure, he had determined to take none but picked men ; and by dint of labour he obtained them.

And Salvation Yeo ?

Salvation was almost wild for a few days at the sudden

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prospect of going in search of his little maid, and of fighting Spaniards once more before he died.

And on the 15th November 1583 dropped down from Bideford Quay to Appledore Pool the tall ship *Rose*, with a hundred men on board (for sailors packed close in those days), beef, pork, biscuit, and good ale (for ale went to sea always then) in abundance, four culverins on her main deck, her poop and forecastle well fitted with swivels of every size, and her racks so full of muskets, calivers, long-bows, pikes, and swords, that all agreed so well-appointed a ship had never sailed "out over Bar."

The next day being Sunday, the whole crew received the Communion together at Northam Church, amid a mighty crowd; and then, going on board again, hove anchor and sailed out over the Bar before a soft east wind, to the music of sackbut, fife, and drum, with discharge of all ordnance, great and small, with cheering of young and old from cliff and strand and quay, and with many a tearful prayer and blessing upon that gallant bark and all brave hearts on board.

CHAPTER XVII

LAND! land! land! Yes, there it was, far away to the south and west, beside the setting sun, a long blue bar between the crimson sea and golden sky. Land at last, with fresh streams, and cooling fruits, and free room for cramped and scurvy-weakened limbs.

"That should be Barbados, your worship," said Drew, the master; "unless my reckoning is far out, which, Heaven knows, it has no right to be, after such a passage, and God be praised."

"Barbados? I never heard of it."

"Very like, sir: but Yeo and I were here with Captain Drake, and I was here after, too, with poor Captain Barlow; and there is good harbourage to the south and west of it, I remember."

"What say you, my masters?" asked Amyas. "How can we do better than to spend a few days here, to get our sick round, before we make the Main, and set to our work?"

All approved the counsel except Frank, who was silent.

"Come, fellow-adventurer," said Cary, "we must have your voice too."

"To my impatience, Will," said he, aside in a low voice, "there is but one place on earth, and I am all day longing for wings to fly thither: but the counsel is right. I approve it."

So the verdict was announced, and received with a hearty cheer by the crew; and long before morning they had run along the southern shore of the island, and were feeling their way into the bay where Bridgetown now stands.

At last the ship stopped; at last the cable rattled through the hawsehole; and then, careless of the chance of lurking Spaniard or Carib, an instinctive cheer burst from every throat. Poor fellows! Amyas had much ado to prevent them going on shore at once, dark as it was, by reminding them that it wanted but two hours of day.

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"Never were two such long hours," said one young lad, fidgeting up and down.

"You never were in the Inquisition," said Yeo, "or you'd know better how slow time can run. Stand you still, and give God thanks you're where you are."

"I say, Gunner, be there goold to that island?"

"Never heard of none; and so much the better for it," said Yeo drily.

"But, I say, Gunner," said a poor scurvy-stricken cripple, licking his lips, "be there oranges and limmons there?"

"Not of my seeing; but plenty of good fruit down to the beach, thank the Lord. There comes the dawn at last."

Up flushed the rose, up rushed the sun, and the level rays glittered on the smooth stems of the palm-trees, and threw rainbows across the foam upon the coral-reefs, and gilded lonely uplands far away, where now stands many a stately country-seat and busy engine-house.

The sick were lifted over the side, and landed boat-load after boat-load on the beach, to stretch themselves in the shade of the palms; and in half an hour the whole crew were scattered on the shore, except some dozen worthy men, who had volunteered to keep watch and ward on board till noon.

And now the first instinctive cry of nature was for fruit! fruit! fruit! The poor lame wretches crawled from place to place plucking greedily the violet grapes of the creeping shore vine, and staining their mouth and blistering their lips with the prickly pears, in spite of Yeo's entreaties and warnings against the thorns. Some of the healthy began hewing down coco-nut trees to get at the nuts, doing little thereby but blunt their hatchets; till Yeo and Drew, having mustered half a dozen reasonable men, went off inland, and returned in an hour laden with the dainties of that primeval orchard, and then all, sitting on the sandy turf, defiant of galli-wasps and jack-spaniards, and all the weapons of the insect host, partook of the equal banquet.

And Frank wandered up and down, silent, but rather in wonder than in sadness, while great Amyas walked after him, his mouth full of junipa-apples, and enacted the part of showman, with a sort of patronising air, as

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one who had seen the wonders already, and was above being astonished at them.

They wandered on together through the glorious tropic woods, and then returned to the beach to find the sick already grown cheerful, and many who that morning could not stir from their hammocks, pacing up and down, and gaining strength with every step.

"Well done, lads!" cried Amyas, "keep a cheerful mind. We will have the music ashore after dinner, for want of mermaids to sing to us, and those that can dance may."

And so those four days were spent; and the men, like schoolboys on a holiday, gave themselves up to simple merriment, not forgetting, however, to wash the clothes, take in fresh water, and store up a good supply of such fruit as seemed likely to keep; until, tired with vain rambles after gold, which they expected to find in every bush, in spite of Yeo's warnings that none had been heard of on the island, they were fain to lounge about, full-grown babies, picking up shells and sea-fans to take home to their sweethearts, smoking agoutis out of the hollow trees, with shout and laughter, and tormenting every living thing they could come near, till not a land-crab dare look out of his hole, or an armadillo unroll himself, till they were safe out of the bay, and off again to the westward.

CHAPTER XVIII

THEY had slipped past the southern point of Grenada in the night, and were at last within that fairy ring of islands, on which nature had concentrated all her beauty, and man all his sin. If Barbados had been invested in the eyes of the newcomers with some strange glory, how much more the seas on which they now entered, which smile in almost perpetual calm, untouched by the hurricane which roars past them far to northward! Sky, sea, and islands were one vast rainbow; though little marked, perhaps, by those sturdy practical sailors, whose main thought was of Spanish gold and pearls; and as little by Amyas, who, accustomed to the scenery of the tropics, was speculating inwardly on the possibility of extirpating the Spaniards, and annexing the West Indies to the domains of Queen Elizabeth.

The next day saw them running along the north side of Margarita, the Isle of Pearls. They had passed undiscovered (as far as they could see) the castle which the Spaniards had built at the eastern end for the protection of the pearl fisheries.

At last they opened a deep and still bight, wooded to the water's edge; and lying in the roadstead a caravel and three boats by her. And at that sight there was not a man but was on deck at once, and not a mouth but was giving its opinion of what should be done. Some were for sailing right into the roadstead, the breeze blowing fresh toward the shore (as it usually does throughout those islands in the afternoon). However, seeing the billows break here and there off the bay's mouth, they thought it better, for fear of rocks, to run by quietly and then send in the pinnace and the boat.

So holding on their course till they were shut out by the next point, they started; Cary in the largest boat with twenty men, and Amyas in the smaller one with fifteen more; among whom was John Brimblecombe who must needs come in his cassock and bands, with an old sword of his uncle's which he prized mightily.

When they came to the bight's mouth, they found, as they had expected, coral rocks, and too many of them, so that they had to run along the edge of the reef a long way before they could find a passage for the boats.

Having got through the reef, in they ran with a fair breeze, the caravel not being now a musket-shot off. Cary laid her aboard before the Spaniards had time to get to their ordnance; and standing up in the stern-sheets, shouted to them to yield. The captain asked boldly enough, "In whose name?" "In the name of common sense, ye dogs," cries Will; "do you not see that you are but fifty strong to our twenty?" Whereon up the side he scrambled, and the captain fired a pistol at him. Cary knocked him over, unwilling to shed needless blood; on which all the crew yielded, some falling on their knees, some leaping overboard; and the prize was taken.

In the meanwhile, Amyas had pulled round under her stern, and boarded the boat which was second from her, for the nearest was fast alongside, and so a sure prize. The Spaniards in her yielded without a blow, crying, "Misericordia"; and the negroes, leaping overboard, swam ashore like sea-dogs. Meanwhile, the third boat, which was not an oar's length off, turned to pull away. Whereby befell a notable adventure: for John Brimblecombe, casting about in a valiant mind how he should distinguish himself that day, must needs catch up a boat-hook, and claw to her stern, shouting, "Stay, ye Papists! Stay, Spanish dogs!"—by which, as was to be expected, they being ten to his one, he was forthwith pulled overboard, and fell all along on his nose in the sea, leaving the hook fast in her stern.

Where, I know not how, being seized with some panic fear (his lively imagination filling all the sea with sharks), he fell a-roaring like any town bull, and in his confusion never thought to turn and get aboard again, but struck out lustily after the Spanish boat, whether in hope of catching hold of the boat-hook which trailed behind her, or from a very madness of valour, no man could divine; but on he swam, his cassock afloat behind him, looking for all the world like a great black monk-fish, and howling and puffing, with his mouth full of salt water, "Stay, ye Spanish dogs! Help, all good fellows! See you not

that I am a dead man? They are nuzzling already at my toes! He hath hold of my leg! My right thigh is bitten clean off! Oh that I were preaching in Hartland pulpit!"

And so forth, in more frantic case than ever was Panurge in that his ever-memorable sea-sickness; till the English, expecting him every minute to be snapped up by sharks, or brained by the Spaniards' oars, let fly a volley into the fugitives, on which they all leaped overboard like their fellows; whereon Jack scrambled into the boat, and drawing sword with one hand, while he wiped the water out of his eyes with the other, began to lay about him like a very lion, cutting the empty air and crying, "Yield, idolaters! Yield, Spanish dogs!" However, coming to himself after a while, and seeing that there was no one on whom to flesh his maiden steel, he sits down panting in the stern-sheets.

After which they set to work to overhaul their maiden prize, which they found full of hides and salt-pork; and yet not of that alone; for in the captain's cabin, and also in the stern-sheets of the boat which Brimblecombe had so valorously boarded, were certain frails of leaves packed neatly enough, which being opened were full of goodly pearls, though somewhat brown (for the Spaniards used to damage the colour in their haste and greediness, opening the shells by fire, instead of leaving them to decay gradually after the Arabian fashion); with which prize, though they could not guess its value very exactly, they went off content enough, after some malicious fellow had set the ship on fire, which, being laden with hides, was no nosegay as it burnt.

As soon, however, as Amyas was on board again, he rounded his friend Mr. Brimblecombe in the ear, and told him he had better play the man a little more, roaring less before he was hurt, and keeping his breath to help his strokes, if he wished the crew to listen much to his discourses.

The next day was Sunday; on which, after divine service, Amyas read aloud, according to custom, the articles of their agreement; and then seeing abreast of them a sloping beach with a shoot of clear water running into the sea, agreed that they should land there wash the clothes, and again water the ship; for they had found water somewhat scarce at Barbados. On this

party Jack Brimblecombe must needs go, taking with him his sword and a great arquebuse; for he had dreamed last night (he said) that he was set upon by Spaniards, and was sure that the dream would come true.

So they went ashore, after Amyas had given strict commands against letting off fire-arms, for fear of alarming the Spaniards. There they washed their clothes, and stretched their legs with great joy, admiring the beauty of the place. After that they set to work filling the casks and barricos, having laid the boat up to the outflow of the rivulet. And lucky for them it was, as it fell out, that they were all close together at that work, and not abroad skylarking as they had been half an hour before.

Now John Brimblecombe had gone apart as soon as they landed, with a shamefaced and doleful countenance; and sitting down under a great tree, plucked a Bible from his bosom, and read steadfastly, girded with his great sword, and his arquebuse lying by him. This too was well for him, and for the rest; for they had not yet finished their watering, when there was a cry that the enemy was on them; and out of the wood, not twenty yards from the good parson, came full fifty shot, with a multitude of negroes behind them, and an officer in front on horseback, with a great plume of feathers in his hat, and his sword drawn in his hand.

"Stand, for your lives!" shouted Amyas: and only just in time; for there were ten good minutes lost in running up and down before he could get his men into some order of battle. But when Jack beheld the Spaniards, as if he had expected their coming, he plucked a leaf and put it into the page of his book for a mark, laid the book down soberly, caught up his arquebuse, ran like a mad dog right at the Spanish captain, shot him through the body stark dead, and then, flinging the arquebuse at the head of him who stood next, fell on with his sword like a very Colbrand, breaking in among the arquebuses, and striking right and left such ugly strokes, that the Spaniards gave back pell-mell, and shot at him five or six at once with their arquebuses: but whether from fear of him, or of wounding each other, made so bad play with their pieces, that he only got one shrewd gall in his thigh, which made him limp for many a day. But as fast as

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they gave back he came on; and the rest by this time ran up in good order, and altogether nearly forty men well armed. On which the Spaniards turned, and went as fast as they had come, while Cary hinted that, "the dogs had had such a taste of the parson, that they had no mind to wait for the clerk and people."

"Come back, Jack ! Are you mad ?" shouted Amyas.

But Jack (who had not all this time spoken one word) followed them as fiercely as ever, till, reaching a great blow at one of the arquebusiers, he caught his foot in a root; on which down he went, and striking his head against the ground, knocked out of himself all the breath he had left (which between fatness and fighting was not much), and so lay. Amyas, seeing the Spaniards gone, did not care to pursue them : but picked up Jack, who, staring about, cried, "Glory be ! glory be !—How many have I killed ? How many have I killed ?"

"Nineteen, at the least," quoth Cary, "and seven with one back stroke"; and then showed Brimblecombe the captain lying dead, and two arquebusiers, one of which was the fugitive by whom he came to his fall, beside three or four more who were limping away wounded, some of them by their fellows' shot.

"There !" said Jack, pausing and blowing, "will you laugh at me any more, Mr. Cary; or say that I cannot fight, because I am a poor parson's son ?"

Cary took him by the hand, and asked pardon of him for his scoffing, saying that he had that day played the best man of all of them.

CHAPTER XIX

THE men would gladly have hawked a while round Margarita and Cubagua for another pearl prize. But Amyas having, as he phrased it, "fleshed his dogs," was loath to hang about the islands after the alarm had been given. They ran, therefore, south-west across the mouth of that great bay which stretches from the Peninsula of Paria to Cape Codera, leaving on their right hand Tortuga, and on their left the meadow islands of the Piritoos, two long green lines but a few inches above the tideless sea. And now right ahead, sheer out of the sea from base to peak, arose higher and higher the mighty range of the Caraccas mountains; beside which all hills which most of the crew had ever seen seemed petty mounds. Soon the sea became rough and chopping, though the breeze was fair and gentle; and ere they were abreast of the Cape, they became aware of that strong eastward current which, during the winter months, so often baffles the mariner who wishes to go to the westward. All night long they struggled through the billows, with the huge wall of Cape Codera a thousand feet above their heads to the left, and beyond it again, bank upon bank of mountain, bathed in the yellow moonlight.

Morning showed them a large ship, which had passed them during the night upon the opposite course, and was now a good ten miles to the eastward. Yeo was for going back and taking her. Of the latter he made a matter of course; and the former was easy enough, for the breeze blowing dead off the land, was a "soldier's wind, there and back again," for either ship.

Amyas stood somewhat irresolute. His duty to the Queen bade him follow the Spanish vessel; his duty to his vow, to go on to La Guayra. It may seem a far-fetched dilemma. He found it a practical one enough.

However, the counsel of Frank prevailed, and on to La Guayra they went. He half hoped that the Spaniard would see and attack them. However, he went on his way to the eastward; which if he had not done, my story had had a very different ending.

About mid-day a canoe, the first which they had seen, came staggering toward them under a huge three-cornered sail. As it came near, they could see two Indians on board.

"Hail them, Yeo!" said Amyas. "You talk the best Spanish, and I want speech of one of them."

Yeo did so; the canoe, without more ado, ran alongside and lowered her felucca sail, while a splendid Indian scrambled on board like a cat.

He was full six feet high, and as bold and graceful of bearing as Frank or Amyas's self. He looked round for the first moment smilingly, showing his white teeth; but the next, his countenance changed; and springing to the side, he shouted to his comrade in Spanish—

"Treachery! No Spaniard!" and would have leaped overboard, but a dozen strong fellows caught him ere he could do so.

It required some trouble to master him, so strong was he, and so slippery his naked limbs; Amyas, meanwhile, alternately entreated the men not to hurt the Indian, and the Indian to be quiet, and no harm should happen to him; and so, after five minutes' confusion, the stranger gave in sulkily.

"Don't bind him! Let him loose, and make a ring round him. Now, my man, there's a dollar for you."

The Indian's eyes glistened, and he took the coin.

"All I want of you is, first, to tell me what ships are in La Guayra, and next, to go thither on board of me, and show me which is the governor's house, and which the custom-house."

The Indian laid the coin down on the deck, and crossing himself, looked Amyas in the face.

"No, Señor! I am a freeman and a cavalier, a Christian Guayqueria, whose forefathers, first of all the Indians, swore fealty to the King of Spain, and whom he calls to this day in all his proclamations his most faithful, loyal, and noble Guayquerias. God forbid, therefore, that I should tell aught to his enemies, who are my enemies likewise."

A growl arose from those of the men who understood him; and more than one hinted that a cord twined round the head, or a match put between the fingers, would speedily extract the required information.

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"God forbid!" said Amyas, "a brave and loyal man he is, and as such will I treat him. Tell me, my brave fellow, how do you know us to be His Catholic Majesty's enemies?"

The Indian, with a shrewd smile, pointed to half a dozen different objects, saying to each, "Not Spanish."

"Well, and what of that?"

"None but Spaniards and free Guayquerias have a right to sail these seas."

Amyas laughed.

"Thou art a right valiant bit of copper. Pick up thy dollar, and go thy way in peace. Make room for him, men. We can learn what we want without his help."

The Indian paused, incredulous and astonished.

"Overboard with you!" quoth Amyas. "Don't you know when you are well off?"

"Most illustrious Señor," began the Indian, "in repayment for your kindness, I would warn you not to go on to La Guayra. There are ships of war there waiting for you; and moreover, the governor Don Guzman sailed to the eastward only yesterday to look for you; and I wonder much that you did not meet him."

"Don Guzman came out but yesterday to look for us? Are you sure you spoke truth?"

"As I live, Señor, he and another ship, for which I took yours."

Amyas stamped upon the deck: that then was the ship which they had passed!

"Fool that I was to have been close to my enemy, and let my opportunity slip! If I had but done my duty, all would have gone right!"

But it was too late to repine; and after all, the Indian's story was likely enough to be false.

"Off with you!" said he; and the Indian bounded over the side into his canoe, leaving the whole crew wondering at the stateliness and courtesy of this bold sea-cavalier.

So Westward-ho they ran, beneath the mighty northern wall, the highest cliff on earth, some seven thousand feet of rock parted from the sea by a narrow strip of bright green lowland. Here and there a patch of sugar-cane, or a knot of coco-nut trees, close to the water's edge, reminded them that they were in the tropics; but

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above, all was savage, rough, and bare as an Alpine precipice.

And now the last point is rounded, and they are full in sight of the spot in quest of which they have sailed four thousand miles of sea. A low black cliff, crowned by a wall; a battery at either end. Within, a few narrow streets of white houses, running parallel with the sea, upon a strip of flat, which seemed not two hundred yards in breadth; and behind, the mountain wall, covering the whole in deepest shade.

Where was the harbour? There was none. Only an open roadstead, wherein lay tossing at anchor five vessels. The two outer ones were small merchant caravels. Behind them lay two long, low, ugly-looking craft, at sight of which Yeo gave a long whew.

"Galleys, as I'm a sinful saint! And what's that big one inside of them, Robert Drew? She has more than hawseholes in her idolatrous black sides, I think."

"We shall open her astern of the galleys in another minute," said Amyas. "Look out, Cary, your eyes are better than mine."

"Six round portholes on the main deck," quoth Will.

"And I can see the brass patararoes glittering on her poop," quoth Amyas. "Will, we're in for it."

And as he spoke, a puff of white smoke rolled from the eastern fort, and a heavy ball plunged into the water between it and the ship.

"I don't altogether like this," quoth Amyas. "What do they mean by firing on us without warning? And what are those ships of war doing here? Drew, you told me the Armadas never lay here."

"No more, I believe, they do, sir, on account of the anchorage being so bad, as you may see. I'm mortal afeared that rascal's story was true, and that the Dons have got wind of our coming."

"Run up a white flag, at all events. If they do expect us, they must have known some time since, or how could they have got their craft hither?"

"True, sir. They must have come from Santa Martha at the least; perhaps from Carthagen. And that would take a month at least going and coming."

Amyas suddenly recollected Eustace's threat in the

wayside inn. Could he have betrayed their purpose? Impossible!

"Let us hold a council of war, at all events, Frank."

Frank was absorbed in a very different matter. A half mile to the eastward of the town, two or three hundred feet up the steep mountain side, stood a large, low, white house embosomed in trees and gardens. There was no other house of similar size near; no place for one. And was not that the royal flag of Spain which flaunted before it? That must be the governor's house; that must be the abode of the Rose of Torridge!

At last it was agreed to anchor, and wait till midnight. If the ships of war came out, they were to try to run past them, and, desperate as the attempt might be, attempt their original plan of landing to the westward of the town, taking it in flank, plundering the government storehouses, which they saw close to the landing-place, and then fighting their way back to their boats, and out of the roadstead. Two hours would suffice if the armada and the galleys were but once out of the way.

Amyas went forward, called the men together, and told them the plan. It was not very cheerfully received: but what else was there to be done?

They ran down about a mile and a half to the westward, and anchored.

The night wore on, and there was no sign of stir among the shipping; for though they could not see the vessels themselves, yet their lights (easily distinguished by their relative height from those in the town above) remained motionless; and the men fretted and fumed for weary hours at thus seeing a rich prize (for of course the town was paved with gold) within arm's reach, and yet impossible.

But though a venture on the town was impossible, yet there was another venture which Frank was unwilling to let slip. A light which now shone brightly in one of the windows of the governor's house was the lodestar to which all his thoughts were turned; and as he sat in the cabin with Amyas, Cary, and Jack, he opened his heart to them.

"And are we, then," asked he mournfully, "to go without doing the very thing for which we came?"

"What would you do, then?"

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"Go up to that house, Amyas, and speak with her, if Heaven gives me an opportunity, as Heaven, I feel assured, will give."

"If you go, I go with you!" said all three at once.

"No. Amyas, you owe a duty to our mother, and to your ship. Cary, you are heir to great estates; and are bound thereby to your country and to your tenants. John Brimblecombe——"

"Ay!" squeaked Jack. "And what have you to say, Mr. Frank, against my going?—I, who have neither ship nor estates—except, I suppose, that I am not worthy to travel in such good company?"

"Think of your old parents, John, and all your sisters."

"I thought of them before I started, sir, as Mr. Cary knows, and you know too. I came here to keep my vow, and I am not going to turn renegade at the very foot of the cross."

"Some one must go with you, Frank," said Amyas; "if it were only to bring back the boat's crew in case——" and he faltered.

"In case I fall," replied Frank, with a smile. "I will finish your sentence for you, lad; I am not afraid of it, though you may be for me. Yet some one, I fear, must go. Unhappy me! that I cannot risk my own worthless life without risking your more precious lives?"

"Not so, Mr. Frank! Your oath is our oath, and your duty ours!" said John. "I will tell you what we will do, gentlemen all. We three will draw cuts for the honour of going with him."

They agreed, seeing no better counsel, and John put three slips of paper into Frank's hand, with the simple old apostolic prayer—"Show which of us three Thou hast chosen."

The lot fell upon Amyas Leigh.

Frank shuddered, and clasped his hands over his face.

"Well," said Cary, "I have ill-luck to-night; but Frank goes at least in good company."

The tears were glistening in Cary's eyes as he pressed Amyas's hand, and watched the two brothers down over the side upon their desperate errand.

They reached the pebble beach. There seemed no difficulty about finding the path to the house—so bright was the moon, and so careful a survey of the place had

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Frank taken. Leaving the men with the boat (Amyas had taken care that they should be well armed), they started up the beach, with their swords only. Frank assured Amyas that they would find a path leading from the beach up to the house, and he was not mistaken. They found it easily, for it was made of white shell sand; and following it struck into a "tunal," or belt of tall thorny cactuses. Through this the path wound in zigzags up a steep rocky slope, and ended at a wicket-gate. They tried it, and found it open.

"She may expect us," whispered Frank.

"Impossible !"

"Why not ? She must have seen our ship; and if, as seems, the townsfolk know who we are, how much more must she ! Yes, doubt it not, she still longs to hear news of her own land, and some secret sympathy will draw her down towards the sea to-night. See ! the light is in the window still !"

So they went up through the wicket-gate, along a smooth turf walk, into what seemed a pleasure-garden, formed by the hand of man, or rather of woman.

"Whither now ?" said Amyas, in a tone of desperate resignation when they arrived in front of the house.

"Thither ! Where else on earth ?" and Frank pointed to the light, trembling from head to foot, and pushed on.

"For Heaven's sake ! Look at the negroes on the barbeu !"

It was indeed time to stop; for on the barbeu, or terrace of white plaster, which ran all round the front, lay sleeping full twenty black figures.

"What will you do now ? You must step over them to gain an entrance."

"Wait here, and I will go up gently towards the window. She may see me. She will see me as I step into the moonlight. At least I know an air by which she will recognise me, if I do but hum a stave."

"Why, you do not even know that that light is hers !—Down, for your life !"

And Amyas dragged him down into the bushes on his left hand : for one of the negroes, wakening suddenly with a cry, had sat up, and began crossing himself four or five times, in fear of "Duppy," and mumbling various charms, aves, or what not.

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The light above was extinguished instantly.

There was a few minutes' silence, and then Amyas, making one last attempt to awaken Frank to the absurdity of the whole thing, and to laugh him, if possible, out of it, as argument had no effect—

“My dear fellow, I am very hungry and sleepy; and this bush is very prickly; and my boots are full of ants——”

“So are mine.—Look !” and Frank caught Amyas's arm, and clenched it tight.

For round the further corner of the house a dark cloaked figure stole gently, turning a look now and then upon the sleeping negroes, and came on right toward them.

“Did I not tell you she would come ?” whispered Frank, in a triumphant tone.

Amyas was quite bewildered; and to his mind the apparition seemed magical, and Frank prophetic; for as the figure came nearer, incredulous as he tried to be, there was no denying that the shape and the walk were exactly those of her to find whom they had crossed the Atlantic.

But what was that behind her ? Her shadow against the white wall of the house ? Not so. Another figure, cloaked likewise, but taller far, was following on her steps. It was a man's. They could see that he wore a broad sombrero. It could not be Don Guzman, for he was at sea. Who then ? Here was a mystery; perhaps a tragedy. And both brothers held their breaths, while Amyas felt whether his sword was loose in the sheath.

The Rose (if indeed it was she) was within ten yards of them, when she perceived that she was followed. She gave a little shriek. The cavalier sprang forward, lifted his hat courteously, and joined her, bowing low. The moonlight was full upon his face.

“It is Eustace, our cousin ! How came he here, in the name of all the fiends ?”

“Eustace ! Then that is she after all !” said Frank forgetting everything else in her.

And now flashed across Amyas all that had passed between him and Eustace in the moorland inn. Eustace had been beforehand with them, and warned Don Guzman. All was explained now : but how had he got hither ?

The two came on, talking earnestly, and walking at a slow pace, so that the brothers could hear every word.

"What shall we do now?" said Frank. "We have no right to be eavesdroppers."

"But we must be, right or none." And Amyas held him down firmly by the arm.

"But whither are you going, then, my dear madam?" they heard Eustace say in a wheedling tone. "Can you wonder if such strange conduct should cause at least sorrow to your admirable and faithful husband?"

"What do you mean by praising him to me in this fulsome way, sir? Do you suppose that I do not know his virtues better than you?"

"If you do, madam" (this was spoken in a harder tone), "it were wise for you to try them less severely, than by wandering down towards the beach on the very night that you know his most deadly enemies are lying in wait to slay him, plunder his house, and most probably to carry you off from him."

"Carry me off? I will die first!"

"Who can prove that to him? Appearances are at least against you."

"My love to him, and his trust for me, sir!"

"His trust? Have you forgotten, madam, what passed last week, and why he sailed yesterday?"

The only answer was a burst of tears.

"Oh!" sobbed she at last. "And if I have been imprudent, was it not natural to wish to look once more upon an English ship? Are you not English as well as I? Have you no longing recollections of the dear old land at home?"

Eustace was silent.

"How can he ever know it?"

"Why should he not know it?"

"Ah!" she burst out passionately, "why not, indeed, while you are here? You, sir, the tempter, you the eavesdropper, you the sunderer of loving hearts! You, serpent, who found our home a paradise, and see it now a hell!"

"Do you dare to accuse me thus, madam, without a shadow of evidence?"

"Dare? I dare anything, for I know all! I have watched you, sir, and I have borne with you too long."

"Me, madam, whose only sin towards you, as you should know by now, is to have loved you too well? Rose! Rose! have you not blighted my life for me—broken my heart? And how have I repaid you? How but by sacrificing myself to seek you over land and sea. And this is my reward!"

And drawing close to her he whispered in her ear—what, the brothers heard not—but her answer was a shriek which rang through the woods, and sent the night-birds fluttering up from every bough above their heads.

"By Heaven!" said Amyas, "I can stand this no longer. Cut his throat I must——"

"She is lost if his dead body is found by her."

"We are lost if we stay here, then," said Amyas; "for those negroes will hurry down at her cry, and then found we must be."

"Are you mad, madam, to betray yourself by your own cries? The negroes will be here in a moment. I give you one last chance for life, then": and Eustace shouted in Spanish at the top of his voice, "Help, help, servants! Your mistress is being carried off by bandits!"

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Let your woman's wit supply the rest: and forget not him who thus saves you from disgrace."

Whether the brothers heard the last words or not, I know not; but taking for granted that Eustace had discovered them, they sprang to their feet at once, determined to make one last appeal, and then to sell their lives as dearly as they could.

Eustace started back at the unexpected apparition; but a second glance showed him Amyas's mighty bulk, and he spoke calmly—

"You see, madam, I did not call without need. Welcome, good cousins. My charity, as you perceive, has found means to outstrip your craft."

But, as he spoke, Amyas burst through the bushes at him. There was no time to be lost; and ere the giant could disentangle himself from the boughs and shrubs, Eustace had slipped off his long cloak, thrown it over Amyas's head, and run up the alley, shouting for help.

Mad with rage, Amyas gave chase: but in two minutes more Eustace was safe among the ranks of the negroes, who came shouting and jabbering down the path.

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He rushed back. Frank was just ending some wild appeal to Rose—

“Your conscience! your religion!——”

“No, never! I can face the chance of death, but not the loss of him. Go! for God’s sake leave me!”

“You are lost, then,—and I have ruined you!”

“Come off, now or never,” cried Amyas, clutching him by the arm, and dragging him away like a child.

“You forgive me?” cried he.

“Forgive you?” and she burst into tears again.

Frank burst into tears also.

“Let me go back, and die with her—Amyas!—my oath!—my honour!” and he struggled to turn back.

Amyas looked back too, and saw her standing calmly, with her hands folded across her breast, awaiting Eustace and the servants; and he half turned to go back also. Both saw how fearfully appearances had put her into Eustace’s power. Had he not a right to suspect that they were there by her appointment; that she was going to escape with them? And would not Eustace use his power? The thought of the Inquisition crossed their minds. “Was that the threat which Eustace had whispered?” asked he of Frank.

“It was,” groaned Frank in answer.

For the first and last time in his life, Amyas Leigh stood irresolute.

Oh, if Amyas were but alone, and Frank safe home in England! To charge the whole mob, kill her, kill Eustace, and then cut his way back again to the ship, or die,—what matter? as he must die some day,—sword in hand! But Frank!—and then flashed before his eyes his mother’s hopeless face; then rang in his ears his mother’s last bequest to him of that frail treasure. Let Rose, let honour, let the whole world perish, he must save Frank. See! the negroes were up with her now—past her—away for life! and once more he dragged his brother down the hill, and through the wicket, only just in time; for the whole gang of negroes were within ten yards of them in full pursuit.

“Frank,” said he sharply, “if you ever hope to see your mother again, rouse yourself, man, and fight!” And, without waiting for an answer, he turned, and charged

uphill upon his pursuers, who saw the long bright blade, and fled instantly.

"Now, Frank! down to the boat as hard as you can run, while I keep the curs back."

"Amyas! what do you take me for? My madness brought you hither: your devotion shall not bring me back without you."

"Together, then!"

And putting Frank's arm through his, they hurried down shouting to their men.

The boat was not fifty yards off: but fast travelling over the pebbles was impossible, and long ere half the distance was crossed, the negroes were on the beach, and the storm burst. A volley of great quartz pebbles whistled round their heads.

"Come on, Frank! for life's sake! Men, to the rescue! Ah! what was that?"

The dull crash of a pebble against Frank's fair head! Drooping like Hyacinthus beneath the blow of the quoit, he sank on Amyas's arm. The giant threw him over his shoulder, and plunged blindly on,—himself struck again and again.

"Fire, men! Give it the black villains!"

The arquebuses crackled from the boat in front. What were those dull thuds which answered from behind? Echoes? No. Over his head the caliver-balls went screeching. The governor's guard have turned out, followed them to the beach, fixed their calivers, and are firing over the negroes' heads, as the savages rush down upon the hapless brothers.

If, as all say, there are moments which are hours, how many hours was Amyas Leigh in reaching that boat's bow? Alas! the negroes are there as soon as he, and the guard, having left their calivers, are close behind them, sword in hand. Amyas is up to his knees in water—battered with stones—blinded with blood. The boat is swaying off and on against the steep pebble-bank: he clutches at it—misses—falls headlong—rises half-choked with water: but Frank is still in his arms. Another heavy blow—a confused roar of shouts, shots, curses—a confused mass of negroes and English, foam and pebbles, and he recollects no more.

He is lying in the stern-sheets of the boat; stiff, weak, half blind with blood. He looks up; the moon is still bright overhead : but they are away from the shore now, for the wave-crests are dancing white before the land-breeze, high above the boat's side. The boat seems strangely empty. Two men are pulling instead of six ! And what is this lying heavy across his chest ? He pushes, and is answered by a groan. He puts his hand down to rise, and is answered by another groan.

"What's this ?"

"All that are left of us," says Simon Evans of Clovelly.

"All ?" The bottom of the boat seemed paved with human bodies. "O God ! O God !" moans Amyas, trying to rise. "And where—where is Frank ? Frank !"

"Mr. Frank !" cries Evans. There is no answer.

"Dead ?" shrieks Amyas. "Look for him, for God's sake, look !" and struggling from under his living load, he peers into each pale and bleeding face.

"Where is he ? Why don't you speak, forward there ?"

"Because we have naught to say, sir," answers Evans, almost surlily.

Frank was not there.

"Put the boat about ! To the shore !" roars Amyas.

"Look over the gunwale, and judge for yourself, sir !"

The waves are leaping fierce and high before a furious land-breeze. Return is impossible.

"Cowards ! villains ! traitors ! hounds ! to have left him behind."

"Listen you to me, Captain Amyas Leigh," says Simon Evans, resting on his oar; "and hang me for mutiny, if you will, when we're aboard, if we ever get there. Isn't it enough to bring us out to death (as you knew yourself, sir, for you're prudent enough) to please that poor young gentleman's fancy about a wench; but you must call coward an honest man that have saved your life this night, and not a one of us but has his wound to show ?"

Amyas was silent; the rebuke was just.

"I tell you, sir if we've hove a stone out of this boat since we got off, we've hove two hundredweight, and, if the Lord had not fought for us, she'd have been beat to noggin-staves there on the beach."

"How did I come here, then ?"

"Tom Hart dragged you in out of five feet water, and then thrust the boat off, and had his brains beat out for reward. All were knocked down but us two. So help me God, we thought that you had hove Mr. Frank on board just as you were knocked down, and saw William Frost drag him in."

But William Frost was lying senseless in the bottom of the boat. There was no explanation. After all, none was needed.

"And I have three wounds from stones, and this man behind me as many more, besides a shot through his shoulder. Now, sir, be we cowards?"

"You have done your duty," said Amyas, and sank down in the boat, and cried as if his heart would break; and then sprang up, and, wounded as he was, took the oar from Evans's hands. With weary work they made the ship, but so exhausted that another boat had to be lowered to get them alongside.

The alarm being now given, it was hardly safe to remain where they were; and after a stormy and sad argument, it was agreed to weigh anchor and stand off and on till morning; for Amyas refused to leave the spot till he was compelled, though he had no hope (how could he have?) that Frank might still be alive.

CHAPTER XX

WHEN the sun leapt up the next morning, and the tropic light flashed suddenly into the tropic day, Amyas was pacing the deck, with dishevelled hair and torn clothes, his eyes red with rage. Full of impossible projects, he strode and staggered up and down, as the ship thrashed close-hauled through the rolling seas. He would go back and burn the villa. He would take Guayra, and have the life of every man in it in return for his brother's. "We can do it lads!" he shouted. "If Drake took Nombre de Dios, we can take La Guayra." And every voice shouted, "Yes."

"Yes, he shall be avenged. And look there! There is the first crop of our vengeance." And he pointed toward the shore, where between them and the now distant peaks of the Silla, three sails appeared, not five miles to windward.

"There are the Spanish bloodhounds on our heels, the same ships which we saw yesterday off Guayra. Back, lads, and welcome them, if they were a dozen."

There was a murmur of applause from all around; and if any young heart sank for a moment at the prospect of fighting three ships at once, it was awed into silence by the cheer which rose from all the older men.

"Now, my masters, let us serve God, and then to breakfast, and after that clear for action."

Jack Brimblecombe read the daily prayers, and the prayers before a fight at sea, and his honest voice trembled, as, in the Prayer for all Conditions of Men (in spite of Amyas's despair), he added, "and especially for our dear brother, Mr. Francis Leigh, perhaps captive among the idolaters"; and so they rose.

Though there was comparatively little to be done, the ship having been kept as far as could be in fighting order all night, yet there was "clearing of decks, lacing of nettings, making of bulwarks, fitting of waist-cloths, arming of tops, tallowing of pikes, slinging of yards, doubling of sheets and tacks," enough to satisfy even the pedantical soul of Richard Hawkins himself. Amyas took

charge of the poop, Cary of the forecastle, and Yeo, as gunner, of the main deck, while Drew, as master, settled himself in the waist; and all was ready, and more than ready, before the great ship was within two miles of them.

Soon she is within two musket shots of the *Rose*, with the golden flag of Spain floating at her poop; and her trumpets are shouting defiance up the breeze from a dozen brazen throats, which two or three answer lustily from the *Rose*, from whose poop flies the flag of England, and from fore the arms of Leigh and Cary side by side, and over them the ship and bridge of the good town of Bideford.

“Steady helm !” said Amyas. “What is he after now ?”

The Spaniard, who had been coming upon them right down the wind under a press of sail, took in his light canvas.

“He don’t know what to make of our waiting for him so bold,” said the helmsman.

“He does though, and means to fight us,” cried another. “See, he is hauling up the foot of his mainsail : but he wants to keep the wind of us.”

“Let him try, then,” quoth Amyas. “Keep her closer still. Let no one fire till we are about. Man the star-board guns; to starboard, and wait, all small-arm men. Pass the order down to the gunner, and bid all fire high, and take the rigging.”

Bang went one of the Spaniard’s bow guns, and the shot went wide. Then another and another, while the men fidgeted about, looking at the priming of their muskets, and loosened their arrows in the sheaf.

Amyas laughed to himself. “Hold on yet awhile. More ways of killing a cat than choking her with cream. Drew, there, are your men ready ?”

“Ay, ay, sir !” and on they went, closing fast with the Spaniard, till within a pistol-shot.

“Ready about !” and about she went like an eel, and ran upon the opposite tack right under the Spaniard’s stern. The Spaniard, astounded at the quickness of the manœuvre, hesitated a moment, and then tried to get about also, as his only chance; but it was too late, and while his lumbering length was still hanging in the wind’s eye,

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Amyas's bowsprit had all but scraped his quarter, and the *Rose* passed slowly across his stern at ten yards' distance.

"Now, then!" roared Amyas. "Fire, and with a will! Have at her, archers: have at her, muskets all"; and in an instant a storm of bar and chain-shot, round and canister, swept the proud Don from stem to stern, while through the white cloud of smoke the musket-balls, and the still deadlier cloth-yard arrows, whistled and rushed upon their venomous errand. Down went the steersman, and every soul who manned the poop. Down went the mizzen-topmast, in went the stern windows and quarter-galleries; while, most glorious of all, the golden flag of Spain, which the last moment flaunted above their heads, hung trailing in the water. The ship, her tiller shot away, and her helmsman killed, staggered helplessly a moment, and then fell up into the wind.

"Well done, men of Devon!" shouted Amyas, as cheers rent the welkin.

"She has struck," cried some, as the deafening hurrahs died away.

"Not a bit," said Amyas. "Hold on, helmsman, and leave her to patch her tackle while we settle the galleys."

On they shot merrily, and long ere the armada could get herself to rights again, were two good miles to windward, with the galleys sweeping down fast upon them.

And two venomous-looking craft they were, as they shot through the short chopping sea upon some forty oars apiece, stretching their sword-fish snouts over the water, as if snuffing for their prey.

"Must we fire upon the slaves?" asked more than one, as the thought crossed him.

Amyas sighed.

"Spare them all you can, in God's name: but if they try to run us down rake them we must, and God forgive us."

The two galleys came on abreast of each other, some forty yards apart. They were now within musket-shot, and opened fire from their bow-guns; but, owing to the chopping sea, their aim was wild. Amyas, as usual, withheld his fire.

The Spaniards, seeing him wait for them, gave a shout of joy—was the Englishman mad? And the two galleys

converged rapidly, intending to strike him full, one on each bow.

They were within forty yards—another minute, and the shock would come. The Englishman's helm went up, his yards creaked round, and gathering way, he plunged upon the larboard galley.

"A dozen gold nobles to him who brings down the steersman!" shouted Cary, who had his cue.

A flight of arrows from the forecastle rattled upon the galley's quarter-deck.

Hit or not hit, the steersman lost his nerve, and shrank from the coming shock. The galley's helm went up to port, and her beak slid, all but harmless, along Amyas's bow; a long, dull grind, and then loud crack on crack, as the *Rose* sawed slowly through the bank of oars, from stem to stern; hurling the wretched slaves in heaps upon each other; and ere her mate on the other side could swing round, to strike him in his new position, Amyas's whole broadside, great and small, had been poured into her at pistol-shot, answered by a yell which rent their ears and hearts.

"Spare the slaves! Fire at the soldiers!" cried Amyas, but the work was too hot for much discrimination; for the larboard galley, crippled but not undaunted, swung round across his stern, and hooked herself venomously on to him.

It was a move more brave than wise; for it prevented the other galley from returning to the attack without exposing herself a second time to the English broadside; and a desperate attempt of the Spaniards to board at once through the stern-ports and up the quarter was met with such a demurrer of shot and steel, that they found themselves in three minutes again upon the galley's poop, accompanied to their intense disgust by Amyas Leigh and twenty English swords.

Five minutes' hard cutting, hand to hand, and the poop was clear. The soldiers in the forecastle had been able to give them no assistance, open as they lay to the arrows and musketry from the *Rose's* lofty stern. Amyas rushed along the central gangway, shouting in Spanish, "Freedom to the slaves! death to the masters!" clambered into the forecastle, followed close by his swarm of wasps and set them so good an example how to use their stings

that in three minutes more there was not a Spaniard on board who was not dead or dying.

"Let the slaves free!" shouted he. "Throw us a hammer down, men. Hark! there's an English voice!"

There is indeed. From amid the wreck of broken oars and writhing limbs, a voice is shrieking in broadest Devon to the master, who is looking over the side.

"Oh, Robert Drew! Robert Drew! Come down, and take me out of hell."

"Who be you, in the name of the Lord?"

"Don't you mind William Prust, that Captain Hawkins left behind in the Honduras, years and years ago? There's nine of us aboard, if your shot hasn't put 'em out of their misery. Come down, if you've a Christian heart, come down!"

Utterly forgetful of all discipline, Drew leaps down, hammer in hand, and the two old comrades rush into each other's arms.

The nine men (luckily none of them wounded) are freed, and helped on board, to be hugged and kissed by old comrades and young kinsmen; while the remaining slaves, furnished with a couple of hammers, are told to free themselves and help the English. The wretches answer by a shout; and Amyas, once more safe on board again, dashes after the other galley, which has been hovering out of reach of his guns.

"Are there any English on board of her?" asks Amyas, loth to lose the chance of freeing a countryman.

"Never a one, sir, thank God."

So they set to work to repair damages; while the liberated slaves, having shifted some of the galley's oars, pull away after their comrade; and that with such a will, that in ten minutes they have caught her up, and careless of the Spaniards' fire, boarded her *en masse*, with yells as of a thousand wolves. There will be fearful vengeance taken on those tyrants, unless they play the man this day.

But half the day's work, or more than half, still remained to be done; and hardly were the decks cleared afresh, and the damage repaired as best it could be, when the Spaniard came ranging up to leeward, as close-hauled as she could.

She was a long flush-decked ship of full five hundred tons, more than double the size, in fact, of the *Rose*, though not so lofty in proportion; and many a bold heart

beat loud, and no shame to them, as she began firing away merrily, determined, as all well knew, to wipe out in English blood the disgrace of her late foil.

So they waited for five minutes more, and then set to work quietly, after the fashion of English mastiffs, though, like those mastiffs, they waxed right mad before three rounds were fired, and the white splinters (sight beloved) began to crackle and fly.

"Blow, jolly breeze," cried one, "and lay the Don over all thou canst.—What the murrain is gone, aloft there ? "

Alas ! a crack, a flap, a rattle ; and blank dismay ! An unlucky shot had cut the foremast (already wounded) in two, and all forward was a mass of dangling wreck.

"Forward, and cut away the wreck !" said Amyas unmoved. "Small arm men, be ready. He will be aboard of us in five minutes ! "

It was too true. The *Rose*, unmanageable from the loss of her head-sail, lay at the mercy of the Spaniard ; and the archers and musketeers had hardly time to range themselves to leeward, when the *Madre Dolorosa's* chains were grinding against the *Rose's*, and grapples tossed on board from stem to stern.

"Don't cut them loose !" roared Amyas. "Let them stay and see the fun ! Now, dogs of Devon, show your teeth, and hurrah for God and the Queen ! "

And then began a fight most fierce and fell : the Spaniards, according to their fashion, attempting to board ; the English, amid fierce shouts of "God and the Queen !" "God and St. George for England !" sweeping them back by showers of arrows and musket-balls, thrusting them down with pikes, hurling grenades and stink-pots from the tops : while the swivels on both sides poured their grape, and bar, and chain, and the great main-deck guns, thundering muzzle to muzzle, made both ships quiver and recoil, as they smashed the round shot through and through each other.

Thrice the Spaniards clambered on board ; and thrice surged back before that deadly hail. The decks on both sides were very shambles ; and Jack Brimblecombe, who had fought as long as his conscience would allow him found, when he turned to a more clerical occupation enough to do in carrying poor wretches to the surgeon

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without giving that spiritual consolation which he longed to give, and they to receive. At last there was a lull in that wild storm. No shot was heard from the Spaniard's upper deck.

Amyas leaped into the mizzen-rigging, and looked through the smoke. Dead men he could descry through the blinding veil, rolled in heaps, laid flat; dead men and dying: but no man upon his feet. The last volley had swept the deck clear; one by one had dropped below to escape that fiery shower; and alone at the helm, grinding his teeth with rage, his moustachios curling up to his very eyes, stood the Spanish captain.

Now was the moment for a counter-stroke. Amyas shouted for the boarders, and in two minutes he was over the side, and clutching at the Spaniard's mizzen-rigging.

What was this? The distance between him and the enemy's side was widening. Was she sheering off? Yes—and rising too, growing bodily higher every moment, as if by magic. Amyas looked up in astonishment, and saw what it was. The Spaniard was heeling fast over to leeward away from him. Her masts were all sloping forward, swifter and swifter—the end was come, then!

“Back! in God's name, back, men! She is sinking by the head!” And with much ado some were dragged back, some leaped back, as the huge ship rolled up more and more, like a dying whale, exposing all her long black hulk almost down to the keel, and one of her lower-deck guns, as if in defiance, exploded upright into the air, hurling the ball to the very heavens.

They cut away, and the *Rose*, released from the strain, shook her feathers on the wave-crest like a freed seagull, while all men held their breaths.

Suddenly the glorious creature righted herself and rose again, as if in noble shame, for one last struggle with her doom. Her bows were deep in the water, but her after-deck still dry. Righted: but only for the moment, long enough to let her crew come pouring wildly up on deck, with cries and prayers, and rush aft to the poop, where, under the flag of Spain, stood the tall captain, his left hand on the standard staff, his sword pointed in his right.

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"Back, men!" they heard him cry, "and die like valiant mariners."

Some of them ran to the bulwarks, and shouted "Mercy! We surrender!" and the English broke into a cheer and called to them to run her alongside.

"Silence!" shouted Amyas. "I take no surrender from mutineers. Señor," cried he to the captain, springing into the rigging and taking off his hat, "for the love of God and these men, strike! and surrender."

The Spaniard lifted his hat and bowed courteously, and answered, "Impossible, Señor. No course is good which stains my honour."

"God have mercy on you, then!"

"Amen!" said the Spaniard, crossing himself.

She gave one awful lunge forward, and dived under the coming swell, hurling her crew under the eddies. Nothing but the point of her poop remained, and there stood the stern and steadfast Don, cap-à-pie in his glistening black armour, immovable as a man of iron, while over him the flag, which claimed the empire of both worlds, flaunted its gold aloft and upwards in the glare of the tropic noon.

Another moment and the gulf had swallowed his victim, and the poop, and him; and nothing remained of the *Madre Dolorosa* but a few floating spars and struggling wretches, while a great awe fell upon all men. And then, suddenly collecting themselves, as men awakened from a dream, half a dozen desperate gallants, reckless of sharks and eddies, leaped overboard, swam towards the flag, and towed it alongside in triumph.

"And now, then, my masters," said Salvation Yeo, "shall we inshore again and burn La Guayra?"

"Art thou never glutted with Spanish blood, thou old wolf?" asked Will Cary.

"Never, sir," answered Yeo.

"To St. Yago be it," said Amyas, "if we can get there but—God help us!"

And he looked round sadly enough; while no one needed that he should finish his sentence, or explain his "but."

The foremast was gone, the mainyard sprung, the rigging hanging in elf-locks, the hull shot through and through in twenty places, the deck strewn with the bodies of nine good men, besides sixteen wounded down below; while

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he pitiless sun, right above their heads, poured down a flood of fire upon a sea of glass.

And it would have been well if faintness and weariness had been all that was the matter; but now that the excitement was over, the collapse came; and the men sat down listlessly and sulkily by twos and threes upon the deck, starting and wincing when they heard some poor fellow below cry out under the surgeon's knife; or murmuring to each other that all was lost. Drew tried in vain to rouse them, telling them that all depended on rigging a jury-mast forward as soon as possible. They answered only by growls; and at last broke into open reproaches. Even Will Cary's volatile nature, which had kept him up during the fight, gave way when Yeo and the carpenter came aft and told Amyas in a low voice—

"We are hit somewhere forward, below the water-line, sir. She leaks a terrible deal, and the Lord will not vouchsafe to us to lay our hands on the place, for all our searching."

"What are we to do now, Amyas, in the devil's name?" asked Cary peevishly.

"What are we to do, in God's name, rather," answered Amyas in a low voice. "Will, Will, what did God make you a gentleman for, but to know better than those poor rickie fellows forward, who blow hot and cold at every change of weather!"

"I wish you'd come forward and speak to them, sir," said Yeo, who had overheard the last words, "or we shall get nought done."

Amyas went forward instantly.

"Now then, my brave lads, what's the matter here, what you are all sitting on your tails like monkeys?"

"Ugh!" grunts one. "Don't you think our day's work has been long enough yet, captain?"

"You don't want us to go into La Guayra again, sir? There are enough of us thrown away already, I reckon, about that wench there."

And now Amyas's conscience smote him (and his simple and pious soul took the loss of his brother as God's verdict on his conduct), because he had set his own private affection, even his own private revenge, before the safety of his ship's company and the good of his country.

"Ah," said he to himself, as he listened to his men's

reproaches, "if I had been thinking, like a loyal soldier, of serving my Queen, and crippling the Spaniard, I should have taken that great bark three days ago, and in it the very man I sought !"

So "choking down his old man," as Yeo used to say, he made answer cheerfully—

"I'll tell you where we are going, lads. Like it or leave it as you will, I have no secrets from my crew. We are going inshore there to find a harbour, and careen the ship."

There was a start and a murmur.

"Inshore ? Into the Spaniards' mouths ?"

"All in the Inquisition in a week's time."

"Better stay here, and be drowned."

"You're right in that last," shouts Cary. "That's the right death for blind puppies. Look you ! I don't know in the least where we are, and I hardly know stem from stern aboard ship; and the captain may be right or wrong—that's nothing to me; but this I know, that I am a soldier, and will obey orders; and where he goes, I go; and whosoever hinders me must walk up my sword to do it."

Amyas pressed Cary's hand, and then—

"And here's my broadside next, men. I'll go nowhere and do nothing without the advice of Salvation Yeo and Robert Drew; and if any man in the ship knows better than these two, let him up, and we'll give him a hearing. We have five shot between wind and water, and one somewhere below. Can we face a gale of wind in that state, or can we not ?"

Silence.

"Can we get home with a leak in our bottom ?"

Silence.

"Then what can we do but run inshore, and take our chance ? Speak ! It's a coward's trick to do nothing because what we must do is not pleasant. Will you be like children, that would sooner die than take nasty physic, or will you not ?"

Silence still.

"Come along now ! Here's the wind again round with the sun, and up to the north-west. In with her !"

Sulkily enough, but unable to deny the necessity, the men set to work, and the vessel's head was put toward

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the land, but when she began to slip through the water, the leak increased so fast that they were kept hard at work at the pumps for the rest of the afternoon.

The current had by this time brought them abreast of the bay of Higuerote; and luckily for them, safe out of the short heavy swell which it causes round Cape Codera. Looking inland, they had now to the south-west that noble headland, backed by the Caracca mountains, range on range, up to the Silla and the Neguator; while, right ahead of them to the south, the shore sank suddenly into a low line of mangrove-wood, backed by primeval forest. As they ran inward, all eyes were strained greedily to find some opening in the mangrove belt: but none was to be seen for some time. The lead was kept going; and every fresh heave announced shallower water.

"We shall have very shoal work off those mangroves, Yeo," said Amyas; "I doubt whether we shall do aught now, unless we find a river's mouth."

"If the Lord thinks a river good for us, sir, He'll show us one." So on they went, keeping a south-east course, and at last an opening in the mangrove belt was hailed with a cheer from the older hands.

Off the mouth they sent in Drew and Cary with a boat, and watched anxiously for an hour. The boat returned with a good report of two fathoms of water over the bar, impenetrable forests for two miles up, the river sixty yards broad, and no sign of man. The river's banks were soft and sloping mud, fit for careening.

They towed the ship up about half a mile to a point where she could not be seen from the seaward; and there moored her to the mangrove stems. Amyas ordered a boat out, and went up the river himself to reconnoitre. He rowed some three miles, till the river narrowed suddenly, and was all but covered in by the interlacing boughs of mighty trees. There was no sign that man had been there since the making of the world.

He dropped down the stream again, thoughtfully and sadly. How many years ago was it that he passed this river's mouth? Three days. And yet how much had passed in them! Don Guzman found and lost—Rose found and lost—a great victory gained, and yet lost—perhaps his ship lost—above all, his brother lost.

The night mist began to steam and wreath upon the foul

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beer-coloured stream. The loathly floor of liquid mud lay bare beneath the mangrove-forest.

The alligators, lounging in the slime, lifted their horny eyelids lazily, and leered upon Amyas as he passed, with stupid savageness. Lines of tall herons stood dimly in the growing gloom, like white fantastic ghosts, watching the passage of the doomed boat. All was foul, sullen, weird as witches' dream. If Amyas had seen a crew of skeletons glide down the stream behind him, with Satan standing at the helm, he would have scarcely been surprised. What fitter craft could haunt that Stygian flood ?

That night every man of the boat's crew, save Amyas, was down with raging fever; before ten the next morning, five more men were taken, and others sickening fast.

CHAPTER XXI

AMYAS would have certainly taken the yellow fever, but for one reason, which he himself gave to Cary. He had no time to be sick while his men were sick.

He called a council of war, or rather a sanitary commission, the next morning; for he was fairly at his wits' end. The men were panic-stricken, ready to mutiny: Amyas told them that he could not see any possible good which could accrue to them by killing him, or—(for there were two sides to every question)—being killed by him: and then went below to consult. The doctor talked mere science, or non-science, about humours, complexions, and animal spirits. Jack Brimblecombe, mere pulpit, about its being the visitation of God. Cary, mere despair, though he jested over it with a smile. Yeo, mere stoic fatalism, though he quoted Scripture to back the same. Drew, the master, had nothing to say. His "business was to sail the ship, and not to cure calentures."

Whereon Amyas clutched his locks, according to custom; and at last broke forth—

"Gentlemen, we cannot get the ship to sea as she is; and if we could, we cannot go home empty-handed; and we surely cannot stay here to die of fever.—We must leave the ship and go inland."

"Inland?" answered every voice but Yeo's.

"Yes. Up to the mountains; stockade a camp, and get our sick and provisions thither."

"And what next?"

"And when we are recruited, march over the mountains, and surprise St. Yago de Leon."

Cary swore a great oath. "Amyas! you are a daring fellow!"

"Not a bit. It's the plain path of prudence."

"So it is, sir," said old Yeo; "and I follow you in it."

"And so do I," squeaked Jack Brimblecombe.

"Nay, then, Jack, thou shalt not outrun me. So I say yes, too," quoth Cary.

"Mr. Drew?"

"At your service, sir, to live or die. I know nought about stockading; but Sir Francis would have given the same counsel, I verily believe, if he had been in your place."

"Then tell the men that we start in an hour's time."

There is no use keeping the reader for five or six weary hours, under a broiling (or rather stewing) sun, stumbling over mangrove roots, hewing his way through thorny thickets, dragging sick men and provisions up mountain steeps, amid disappointment, fatigue, murmurs, curses, snakes, mosquitoes, false alarms of Spaniards, and every misery save cold, which flesh is heir to. Suffice it that by sunset that evening they had gained a level spot, a full thousand feet above the sea, backed by an inaccessible cliff which formed the upper shoulder of a mighty mountain, defended below by steep wooded slopes, and needing but the felling of a few trees to make it impregnable.

The men were too tired that evening to do much: but ere the sun rose next morning Amyas had them hard at work fortifying their position. It was, as I said, strong enough by nature; for though it was commanded by high cliffs on three sides, yet there was no chance of an enemy coming over the enormous mountain range behind them and still less chance that, if he came, he would discover them through the dense mass of trees which crowned the cliff, and clothed the hills for a thousand feet above. The attack, if it took place, would come from below; and against that Amyas guarded by felling the smaller trees and laying them with their boughs outward over the crest of the slope, thus forming an abattis warranted to bring up in two steps, horse, dog, or man. The trunks were sawn into logs, laid lengthwise and steadied by stakes and mould; and three or four hours' hard work finished the stockade which would defy anything but artillery. The work done, Amyas scrambled up into the boughs of a enormous ceiba-tree, and there sat inspecting his own handiwork, looking out far and wide over the forest-covered plains and the blue sea beyond, and thinking, in his simple straightforward way, of what was to be done next.

To stay there long was impossible; and Amyas made up his mind to move. But whither? Many an hour of thought and thought alone, there in his airy nest; and at last he went down calm and cheerful, and drew Cary and

Yeo aside. They could not, he said, refit the ship without running the risk of fever during the process; an assertion which neither of his hearers was bold enough to deny.

"Let us try St. Yago, then; sack it, come down on La Guayra in the rear, take a ship there, and so get home."

"Nay, Will. If they have strengthened themselves against us at La Guayra, where they had little to lose, surely they have done so at St. Yago, where they have much. I hear the town is large, though new; and besides, how can we get over these mountains without a guide?"

"Or with one?" said Cary, with a sigh, looking up at the vast walls of wood and rock which rose range on range for miles. "But it is strange to find you, at least, throwing cold water on a daring plot."

"What if I had a still more daring one? Did you ever hear of the golden city of Manoa?"

Yeo laughed a grim but joyful laugh. "I have, sir; and so have the old hands, I doubt not."

"So much the better"; and Amyas began to tell Cary all which he had learned from the Spaniard, while Yeo nodded every word thereof with rumours and traditions of his own gathering.

In that mountain-nook the party spent some ten days and more. Several of the sick men died, some from the fever superadded to their wounds; some, probably, from having been bled by the surgeon; the others mended steadily, by the help of certain herbs which Yeo administered, much to the disgust of the doctor, who, of course, wanted to bleed the poor fellows all round, and was all but mutinous when Amyas stayed his hand.

All day long a careful watch was kept among the branches of the mighty ceiba-tree. And what a tree that was! The hugest English oak would have seemed a stunted bush beside it. Once in the tree, you were within a new world, suspended between heaven and earth, and Amyas, as he lounged among the branches, felt at moments as if he would be content to stay there for ever, and feed his eyes and ears with all its wonders. So there he sat (for he often took the scout's place himself), looking out over the fantastic tropic forest at his feet, and the flat mangrove swamps below, and the white sheet of foam-flecked blue; and yet no sail appeared; and the men, as their fear of fever subsided, began to ask when they would go down.

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and refit the ship, and Amyas put them off as best he could, till one noon he saw slipping along the shore from the westward, a large ship under easy sail, and recognized in her, or thought he did so, the ship which they had passed upon their way.

If it was she, she must have run past them to La Guayra in the night, and have now returned, perhaps, to search for them along the coast.

She crept along slowly. He was in hopes that she might pass the river's mouth : but no. She lay too close to the shore ; and, after a while, Amyas saw two boats pull in from her, and vanish behind the mangroves.

Sliding down a liane, he told what he had seen. The men, tired of inactivity, received the news with a shout of joy, and set to work to make all ready for their guests.

Presently a wreath of white smoke curled up from the swamp, and then the report of a caliver. Then, amid the growls of the English, the Spanish flag ran up above the trees, and floated—horrible to behold—at the mast-head of the *Rose*. They were signalling the ship for more hands ; and, in effect, a third boat soon pushed off and vanished into the forest.

Another hour, during which the men had thoroughly lost their temper but not their hearts, by waiting ; and talked so loud, and strode up and down so wildly, that Amyas had to warn them that there was no need to betray themselves ; that the Spaniards might not find them after all ; that they might pass the stockade close without seeing it, that, unless they hit off the track at once, they would probably return to their ship for the present ; and exacted a promise from them that they would be perfectly silent till he gave the word to fire.

Which wise commands had scarcely passed his lips, when, in the path below, glanced the headpiece of a Spanish soldier, and then another and another.

The path was so narrow that two could seldom come up abreast, and so steep that the enemy had much ado to struggle and stumble upwards. The men seemed half-unwilling to proceed, and hung back more than once but Amyas could hear an authoritative voice behind, and presently there emerged to the front, sword in hand, a figure at which Amyas and Cary both started.

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"Is it he?"

"Surely I know those legs among a thousand, though they are in armour."

"It is my turn for him now, Cary, remember! Silence, silence, men!"

The Spaniards seemed to feel that they were leading a forlorn hope. Don Guzman (for there was little doubt that it was he) had much ado to get them on at all.

At last the Spaniards get up the steep slope to within forty yards of the stockade, and pause, suspecting a trap, and puzzled by the complete silence. Amyas leaps on the top of it, a white flag in his hand; but his heart beats so fiercely at the sight of that hated figure, that he can hardly get out the words—

"Don Guzman, the quarrel is between you and me, not between your men and mine. I would have sent in a challenge to you at La Guayra, but you were away; I challenge you now to single combat."

"Lutheran dog, I have a halter for you, but no sword! As you served us at Smerwick, we will serve you now. Pirate and ravisher; you and yours shall share Oxenham's fate, as you have copied his crimes, and learn what it is to set foot unbidden on the dominions of the King of Spain."

"The devil take you and the King of Spain together!" shouts Amyas, laughing loudly. "This ground belongs to him no more than it does to me, but to the Queen Elizabeth, in whose name I have taken as lawful possession of it as you ever did of Caraccas. Fire, men! and God defend the right."

Both parties obeyed the order; Amyas dropped down behind the stockade in time to let a caliver bullet whistle over his head; and the Spaniards recoiled as the narrow face of the stockade burst into one blaze of musketry and swivels, raking their long array from front to rear.

The front ranks fell over each other in heaps; the rear ones turned and ran; overtaken, nevertheless, by the English bullets and arrows, which tumbled them headlong down the steep path.

"Out, men, and charge them! See! the Don is running like the rest!" And scrambling over the abattis Amyas and about thirty followed them fast; for he had hope of learning from some prisoner his brother's fate.

Amyas was unjust in his last words. Don Guzman, as

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if by a miracle, had been only slightly wounded; and seeing his men run, had rushed back and tried to rally them, but was borne away by the fugitives.

However, the Spaniards were out of sight among the thick bushes before the English could overtake them; and Amyas, afraid lest they should rally and surround his small party, withdrew sorely against his will, and found in the pathway fourteen Spaniards, but all dead. For one of the wounded, with more courage than wisdom, had fired on the English as he lay; and Amyas's men, whose blood was maddened both by their desperate situation, and the frightful stories of the rescued galley-slaves, had killed them all before their captain could stop them.

"Are you mad?" cries Amyas, as he strikes up one fellow's sword. "Will you kill an Indian?"

And he drags out of the bushes an Indian lad of sixteen, who, slightly wounded, is crawling like a copper-snake along the ground.

"The black vermin has sent an arrow through my leg, and poisoned; too, most like."

"God grant not; but an Indian is worth his weight in gold to us now," said Amyas, tucking his prize under his arm like a bundle. The lad, as soon as he saw there was no escape, resigned himself to his fate with true Indian stoicism, was brought in, and treated kindly enough, but refused to eat.

However, kind words, kind looks, and the present of that inestimable treasure—a knife—brought him to reason; and he told Amyas that he belonged to a Spaniard who had a company of Indians some fifteen miles to the south-west; that he had fled from his master, and lived by hunting for some months past; and having seen the ship where she lay moored, and boarded her in hope of plunder, had been surprised therein by the Spaniards and forced by threats to go with them as a guide in their search for the English. But now came a part of his story which filled the soul of Amyas with delight. He was an Indian of the Llanos, or great savannahs which lay to the southward beyond the mountains, and had actually been upon the Orinoco. Did he know the way back again? Who could ask such a question of an Indian? And the lad's black eyes flashed fire, as Amyas offered him liberty and iron enough for a dozen Indians, if he would lead the

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through the passes of the mountains, and southward to the mighty river, where lay their golden hopes.

Now was the time to speak; and, assembling his men round him, Amyas opened his whole heart, simply and manfully. This was their only hope of safety. Some of them had murmured that they should perish like John Oxenham's crew. This plan was rather the only way to avoid perishing like them. Don Guzman would certainly return to seek them; and not only he, but land forces from St. Yago. Even if the stockade was not forced, they would be soon starved out; why not move at once, ere the Spaniards could return, and begin a blockade? As for taking St. Yago, it was impossible. The treasure would all be safely hidden, and the town well prepared to meet them. If they wanted gold and glory, they must seek it elsewhere.

"Let fools laugh and stay at home. Wise men dare and win. Saul went to look for his father's asses, and found a kingdom; and Columbus, my men, was called a madman for only going to seek China, and never knew, they say, until his dying day, that he had found a whole new world instead of it. Find Manoa? God only, who made all things, knows what we may find beside!"

So underneath that giant ceiba-tree, those valiant men, reduced by battle and sickness to some eighty, swore a great oath, and kept that oath like men. To search for the golden city for two full years to come, whatever might befall; to stand to each other for weal or woe; to obey their officers to the death; to murmur privately against no man, but bring all complaints to a council of war; to use no profane oaths, but serve God daily with prayer; to take by violence from no man, save from their natural enemies the Spaniards; to be civil and merciful to all savages, and courteous to all women; to bring all booty and all food into the common stock, and observe to the utmost their faith with the adventurers who had fitted out the ship; and finally, to march at sunrise the next morning toward the south, trusting in God to be their guide.

The Cross stands upright in the southern sky. It is the middle of the night. Cary and Yeo glide silently up the hill and into the camp, and whisper to Amyas that they

had done the deed. The sleepers are awakened, and the train sets forth.

Upward and southward ever: but whither, who can tell? They hardly think of whither; but go like sleep-walkers, shaken out of one land of dreams, only to find themselves in another and stranger one. All around is fantastic and unearthly; now each man starts as he sees the figures of his fellows, clothed from head to foot in golden filigree; looks up, and sees the yellow moonlight through the fronds of the huge tree-ferns overhead, as through a cloud of glittering lace. Now they are hewing their way through a thicket of enormous flags; now through bamboos forty feet high; now they are stumbling over boulders waist-deep in cushions of club-moss; now they are struggling through shrubberies of heaths and rhododendrons, and woolly incense-trees, where every leaf, as they brush past, dashes some fresh scent into their faces.

But what is that glare away to the northward? The yellow moon is ringed with gay rainbows; but that light is far too red to be the reflection of any beams of hers. Now through the cloud rises a column of black and lurid smoke; the fog clears away right and left around it, and shows beneath, a mighty fire.

The men look at each other with questioning eyes, each half-suspecting, and yet not daring to confess their own suspicions; and Amyas whispers to Yeo—

“You took care to flood the powder?”

“Ay, ay, sir, and to unload the ordnance, too. No use making a noise to tell the Spaniards our whereabouts.”

Yes; that glare rises from the good ship *Rose*. Amyas, like Cortes of old, has burnt his ship, and retreat is now impossible. Forward into the unknown abyss of the New World, and God be with them as they go.

CHAPTER XXII

NEARLY three years are past and gone since that little band had knelt at evensong beneath the giant tree of Guayra. Through untrodden hills and forests, over a space of some eight hundred miles in length by four hundred in breadth, they had been seeking for the Golden City, and they had sought in vain. They had sought it along the wooded banks of the Orinoco, and beyond the roaring foam-world of Maypures, and on the upper waters of the mighty Amazon. They had gone up the streams even into Peru itself, and had trodden the cinchona groves of Loxa, ignorant, as all the world was then, of their healing virtues. They had seen the virgin snows of Chimborazo towering white above the thundercloud, and the giant cone of Cotopaxi blackening in its sullen wrath, before the fiery streams rolled down its sides. Foiled in their search at the back of the Andes, they had turned eastward once more, and plunged from the Alpine cliffs into "the green and misty ocean of the Montana." Slowly and painfully they had worked their way northward again, along the eastern foot of the inland Cordillera, and now they were bivouacking, as it seems, upon one of the many feeders of the Meta, which flow down from the Suma Paz into the forest-covered plains. There they sat, their watch-fires glittering on the stream, beneath the shadows of enormous trees, Amyas and Cary, Brimblecombe, Yeo, and the Indian lad, who has followed them in all their wanderings, alive and well: but as far as ever from Manoa, and its fairy lake, and golden palaces, and all the wonders of the Indian's tale.

There they sit at last—four-and-forty men out of the eighty-four who left the tree of Guayra: where are the rest?

Drew, the master, lies on the banks of the Rio Negro, and five brave fellows by him, slain in fight by the poisoned arrows of the Indians, in a vain attempt to penetrate the mountain gorges of the Parima. Two more lie amid the valleys of the Andes, frozen to death by the fierce slaty

hail which sweeps down from the condor's eyrie; four more were drowned at one of the rapids of the Orinoco, five or six more wounded men are left behind at another rapid among friendly Indians, to be recovered when they can be : perhaps never. Fever, snakes, jaguars, alligators, cannibals, fish, electric eels, have thinned their ranks month by month, and of their march through the primeval wilderness no track remains, except those lonely graves.

And there the survivors sit, beside the silent stream, beneath the tropic moon; sun-dried and lean, but strong and bold as ever. Their ammunition is long since spent, their muskets, spoilt by the perpetual vapour-bath of the steaming woods, are left behind as useless in a cave by some cataract of the Orinoco : but their swords are bright and terrible as ever; and they carry bows of a strength which no Indian arm can bend and arrows pointed with the remnants of their armour; many of them, too, are armed with the pocuna or blow-gun of the Indians—more deadly, because more silent, than the fire-arms which they have left behind them.

"Well," says Will Cary, taking his cigar out of his mouth, "at least we have got something out of those last Indians. It is a comfort to have a puff at tobacco once more, after three weeks' fasting."

"For me," said Jack Brimblecombe, "Heaven forgive me ! but when I get the magical leaf between my teeth again, I feel tempted to sit as still as a chimney, and smoke till my dying day, without stirring hand or foot."

"Then I shall forbid you tobacco, Master Parson," said Amyas; "for we must be up and away again to-morrow. We have been idling here three mortal days, and nothing done."

"Shall we ever do anything? I think the gold of Manoa is like the gold which lies where the rainbow touches the ground, always a field beyond you."

Amyas was silent a while, and so were the rest. There was no denying that their hopes were all but gone. In the immense circuit which they had made, they had met with nothing but disappointment.

"There is but one more chance," said he at length, "and that is, the mountains to the east of the Orinoco,

where we failed the first time. The Incas may have moved on to them when they escaped."

"Why not?" said Cary; "they would so put all the forests, beside the Llanos and half-a-dozen great rivers, between them and those dogs of Spaniards."

"Shall we try it once more?" said Amyas. "This river ought to run into the Orinoco; and once there, we are again at the very foot of the mountains. What say you, Yeo?"

"Gentlemen!" said Yeo, "where you go, I go; and not only I, but every man of us, I doubt not; but we have lost now half our company, and spent our ammunition, so we are no better men, were it not for our swords, than these naked heathens round us. It may be that being a gunner I overprize guns. But it don't need slate and pencil to do this sum—Are forty men without shot as good as eighty with?"

"Thou art right, old fellow, right enough, and I was only jesting for very sorrow, and must needs laugh about it lest I weep about it. Our chance is over, I believe, though I dare not confess as much to the men."

"Sir," said Yeo, "I have a feeling on me that the Lord's hand is against us in this matter. Whether He means to keep this wealth for worthier men than us, or whether it is His will to hide this great city in the secret place of His presence from the strife of tongues, and so to spare them from sinful man's covetousness, and England from that sin and luxury which I have seen gold beget among the Spaniards, I know not, sir; for who knoweth the counsels of the Lord? But I have long had a voice within which saith, 'Salvation Yeo, thou shalt never behold the Golden City which is on earth, where heathens worship sun and moon and the hosts of heaven; be content, therefore, to see that Golden City which is above, where is neither sun nor moon, but the Lord God and the Lamb are the light thereof.'

"And what is more, gentlemen, if, as Scripture says, dreams are from the Lord, I verily believe mine last night came from Him; for as I lay by the fire, sirs, I heard my little maid's voice calling of me, as plain, as ever I heard in my life; and the very same words, sirs, which she learned from me and my good comrade William

Penberthy to say, 'Westward-ho! jolly mariners all!' a bit of an ungodly song, my masters, which we sang in our wild days; but she stood and called it as plain as ever mortal ears heard, and called again till I answered, 'Coming! my maid, coming!' and after that the dear chuck called no more—God grant I find her yet!—and so I woke."

Cary had long since given up laughing at Yeo about the "little maid"; and Amyas answered—

"So let it be, Yeo, if the rest agree: but what shall we do to the westward?"

"Do?" said Cary; "there's plenty to do; for there's plenty of gold, and plenty of Spaniards, too, they say, on the other side of these mountains; so that our swords will not rust for lack of adventures, my gay knights-errant all."

So they chatted on; and before night was half through a plan was matured, desperate enough—but what cared those brave hearts for that? They would cross the Cordillera to Santa Fé de Bogota, of the wealth whereof both Yeo and Amyas had often heard in the Pacific: try to seize either the town or some convoy of gold going from it; make for the nearest river (there was said to be a large one which ran northward thence), build canoes, and try to reach the Northern Sea once more; and then, if Heaven prospered them, they might seize a Spanish ship, and make their way home to England, not, indeed, with the wealth of Manoa, but with a fair booty of Spanish gold.

They started next morning cheerfully enough, and for three hours or more paddled easily up the glassy and windless reaches, between two green flower-bespangled walls of forest, gay with innumerable birds and insects; while down from the branches which overhung the stream long trailers hung to the water's edge, and seemed admiring in the clear mirror the images of their own gorgeous flowers. Rivers, trees, flowers, birds, insects,—it was all a fairy-land: but it was a colossal one; and yet the voyagers took little note of it.

The long processions of monkeys, who kept pace with them along the tree-tops, and proclaimed their wonder in every imaginable whistle, and grunt, and howl, had ceased to move their laughter, as much as the roar of the

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guar and the rustle of the boa had ceased to move their
ar.

At last a soft and distant murmur, increasing gradually
a heavy roar, announced that they were nearing some
ataract; till, turning a point where the deep alluvial soil
se into a low cliff fringed with delicate ferns, they came
all in sight of a scene at which all paused : not with as-
tonishment, but with something very like disgust.

In front of them was a snow-white bar of raging foam,
some ten feet high, along which were ranged three or
four islands of black rock. Each was crested with a knot of
softy palms, whose green tops stood out clear against the
bright sky, while the lower half of their stems loomed hazy
through a luminous veil of rainbowed mist. The banks
right and left of the fall were so densely fringed with a low
edge of shrubs, that landing seemed all but impossible;
and their Indian guide, suddenly looking round him and
whispering, bade them beware of savages; and pointed
to a canoe which lay swinging in the eddies under the
largest island, moored apparently to the root of some
ree.

" Silence all ! " cried Amyas, " and paddie up thither
and seize the canoe. If there be an Indian on the island,
we will have speech of him : but mind and treat him
friendly; and on your lives, neither strike nor shoot, even
if he offers to fight."

So, choosing a line of smooth backwater just in the wake
of the island, they drove their canoes up by main force,
and fastened them safely by the side of the Indian's, while
Amyas, always the foremost, sprang boldly on shore,
whispering to the Indian boy to follow him.

Once on the island, Amyas looked round anxiously for
the expected Indian, but he was nowhere to be seen.
Suddenly, scrambling over the rocky flower-beds to the
other side of the isle, he came upon a little shady beach,
which, beneath a bank of stone some six feet high, fringed
the edge of a perfectly still and glassy bay. Ten yards
further, the cataract fell sheer in thunder : but a high fern-
fringed rock turned its force away from that quiet nook.
In it the water swung slowly round and round in glassy
dark-green rings, among which dimpled a hundred gaudy
fish, waiting for every fly and worm which spun and
quivered on the eddy. Here, if anywhere, was the place

to find the owner of the canoe. He leapt down upon the pebbles; and as he did so, a figure rose from behind a neighbouring rock, and met him face to face.

It was an Indian girl; and yet, when he looked again,—was it an Indian girl? Amyas had seen hundreds of those delicate dark-skinned daughters of the forest, but never such a one as this. Her stature was taller, her limbs were fuller and more rounded; her complexion, though tanned by light, was fairer by far than his own sunburnt face; her hair, crowned with a garland of white flowers, was not lank, and straight, and black, like an Indian's, but of a rich, glossy brown, and curling richly and crisply from her very temples to her knees. She must be the daughter of some great cacique, perhaps of the lost Incas themselves—why not? And full of simple wonder, he gazed upon that fairy vision, while she gazed fearlessly in return upon the mighty stature and the strange garments, and above all, on the bushy beard and flowing yellow locks of the Englishman.

He spoke first, in some Indian tongue, gently and smilingly, and made a half-step forward; but quick as light she caught up from the ground a bow, and held it fiercely toward him, fitted with the long arrow, with which, as he could see, she had been striking fish, for a line of twisted grass hung from its barbed head. Amyas stopped, laid down his own bow and sword, and made another step in advance, smiling still, and making all Indian signs of amity: but the arrow was still pointed straight at his breast, and he knew the mettle and strength of the forest nymphs well enough to stand still and call for the Indian boy: too proud to retreat, but in the uncomfortable expectation of feeling every moment the shaft quivering between his ribs.

The boy, who had been peering from above, leapt down to them in a moment; and began, as the safest method, grovelling on his nose upon the pebbles, while he tried two or three dialects, one of which at last she seemed to understand, and answered in a tone of evident suspicion and anger.

“What does she say?”

“That you are a Spaniard and a robber, because you have a beard.”

“Tell her that we are no Spaniards, but that we hat

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hem; and are come across the great waters to help the Indians to kill them."

The boy translated his speech. The nymph answered by a contemptuous shake of the head.

"Tell her, that if she will send her tribe to us, we will do them no harm. We are going over the mountains to fight the Spaniards, and we want them to show us the way."

The boy had no sooner spoken, than, nimble as a deer, the nymph had sprung up the rocks, and darted between the palm-stems to her canoe. Suddenly she caught sight of the English boat, and stopped with a cry of fear and rage.

"Let her pass!" shouted Amyas, who had followed her close. "Push your boat off, and let her pass. Boy, tell her to go on; they will not come near her."

But she hesitated still, and with arrow drawn to the head, faced first on the boat's crew, and then on Amyas, till the Englishmen had shoved off full twenty yards.

Then, leaping into her tiny piragua, she darted into the wildest whirl of the eddies, shooting along with vigorous strokes, while the English trembled as they saw the frail bark spinning and leaping amid the muzzles of the alligators, and the huge dog-toothed trout: but with the swiftness of an arrow she reached the northern bank, drove her canoe among the bushes, and leaping from it, darted through some narrow opening in the bush, and vanished like a dream.

A full hour passed before they saw anything more of their Indian neighbours; and then from under the bushes shot out a canoe, on which all eyes were fixed in expectation.

Amyas, who expected to find there some remnant of a higher race, was disappointed enough at seeing on board only the usual half-dozen of low-browed, dirty Orsons, painted red with arnotto: but a grey-headed elder at the stern seemed, by his feathers and gold ornaments, to be some man of note in the little woodland community.

The canoe came close up to the island; Amyas saw that they were unarmed, and, laying down his weapons, advanced alone to the bank, making all signs of amity. They were returned with interest by the old man, and Amyas's next care was to bring forward the fish which the fair

nymph had left behind, and, through the medium of the Indian lad, to give the cacique (for so he seemed to be) to understand that he wished to render every one his own.

Whereon the ancient worthy, rising in the canoe, pointed to heaven, earth, and the things under, and commenced a long sermon, in tone, manner, and articulation, very like one of those which the great black-bearded apes were in the habit of preaching every evening when they could get together a congregation of little monkeys to listen, to the great scandal of Jack, who would have it that some evil spirit set them on to mimic him; which sermon, being partly interpreted by the Indian lad, seemed to signify that the valour and justice of the white men had already reached the ears of the speaker, and that he was sent to welcome them into those regions by the Daughter of the Sun.

“The Daughter of the Sun!” quoth Amyas; “then we have found the lost Incas after all.”

He bade the men step boldly into their canoes and follow the old Indian whither he would. The simple children of the forest bowed themselves reverently before the mighty strangers, and then led them smilingly across the stream, and through a narrow passage in the covert, to a hidden lagoon, on the banks of which stood, not Manoa, but a tiny Indian village.

CHAPTER XXIII

THEY beheld, on landing, a scattered village of palm-leaf beds, under which, as usual, the hammocks were slung from tree to tree. Here and there, in openings in the forest, patches of cassava and indigo appeared; and there was a look of neatness and comfort about the little settlement superior to the average.

Some great demonstration was plainly toward; for the children of the forest were arrayed in two lines, right and left of the open space, the men in front, and the women behind; and all bedizened, to the best of their power, with arnotto, indigo, and feathers.

Next, with a hideous yell, leapt into the centre of the space a personage who certainly could not have complained if any one had taken him for the devil, for he had dressed himself up carefully for that very intent, in a jaguar skin with a long tail, grinning teeth, a pair of horns, a plume of black and yellow feathers, and a huge rattle.

"Here's the Piache, the rascal," said Amyas.

"Ay," says Yeo, "in Satan's livery, and I've no doubt his works are according, trust him for it."

"Don't be frightened, Jack," says Cary, backing up Brimblecombe from behind. "It's your business to tackle him, you know. At him boldly, and he'll run."

The Piache, after capering and turning head over heels with much howling, beckoned Amyas and his party to follow him; they did so, seeing that the Indians were all unarmed, and evidently in the highest good humour.

The Piache went toward the door of a carefully closed hut, and crawling up to it on all fours in most abject fashion, began whining to some one within.

"Ask what he is about, boy."

The lad asked the old cacique, who had accompanied them, and received for answer, that he was consulting the Daughter of the Sun.

And from the interior of the hut rose a low sweet song, at which all the simple Indians bowed their heads in reverence; and the English were hushed in astonishment;

for the voice was not shrill or guttural, like that of an Indian, but round, clear, and rich, like a European's; and as it swelled and rose louder and louder, showed a compass and power which would have been extraordinary anywhere. At last one triumphant burst, so shrill that all ears rang again, and then dead silence. The Piache, suddenly restored to life, jumped upright, and recommenced preaching at Amyas.

"Tell the howling villain to make short work of it, lad ! His tune won't do after that last one."

The lad, grinning, informed Amyas that the Piache signified their acceptance as friends by the Daughter of the Sun; that her friends were theirs, and her foes theirs. Whereon the Indians set up a scream of delight, and Amyas, rolling another tobacco leaf up in another strip of plantain, answered—

"Then let her give us some cassava," and lighted a fresh cigar.

Whereon the door of the hut opened, and the Indians prostrated themselves to the earth, as there came forth the same fair apparition which they had encountered upon the island, but decked now in feather-robes, and plumes of every imaginable hue.

Slowly and stately, as one accustomed to command, she walked up to Amyas, glancing proudly round on her prostrate adorers, and pointing with graceful arms to the trees, the gardens and the huts, gave him to understand by signs (so expressive were her looks, that no words were needed) that all was at his service; after which, taking his hand, she lifted it gently to her forehead.

At that sign of submission a shout of rapture arose from the crowd; and as the mysterious maiden retired again to her hut, they pressed round the English, caressing and admiring, pointing with equal surprise to their swords, to their Indian bows and blow-guns, and to the trophies of wild beasts with which they were clothed; while women hastened off to bring fruit, flowers, and cassava: and, to make a long story short, the English sat down beneath the trees, and feasted merrily.

They visited the village again next day; and every day for a week or more: but the maiden appeared but rarely, and when she did, kept her distance as haughtily as a queen.

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Amyas, of course, as soon as he could converse somewhat better with his new friends, was not long before he questioned the cacique about her. But the old man made an owl's face at her name, and intimated by mysterious shakes of the head that she was a very strange personage, and the less said about her the better. She was "a child of the Sun," and that was enough.

"Tell him, boy," quoth Cary, "that we are the children of the Sun by his first wife; and have orders from him to enquire how the Indians have behaved to our step-sister, for he cannot see all their tricks down here, the trees are so thick. So let him tell us, or all the cassava plants shall be delighted."

"Will, Will, don't play with lying!" said Amyas: but the threat was enough for the cacique, and taking them in his canoe a full mile down the stream, as if in fear that the wonderful maiden should overhear him, he told them, in a sort of rhythmic chant, how, many moons ago (he could not tell how many), his tribe was a mighty nation, and dwelt in Papamene, till the Spaniards drove them forth. And how, as they wandered northward, far away upon the mountain spurs beneath the flaming cone of Cotopaxi, they had found this fair creature wandering in the forest, about the bigness of a seven years' child. Wondering at her white skin and her delicate beauty, the simple Indians worshipped her as a god, and led her home with them. And when they found that she was human like themselves, their wonder scarcely lessened.

So, as the girl grew up among them, she was tended with royal honours, by command of the conjurer of the tribe, that so her forefather of the Sun might be propitious to them, and the Incas might show favour to the poor ruined Omaguas, in the day of their coming glory. And as she grew, she had become, it seemed, somewhat of a prophetess among them, as well as an object of fetish-worship; for she was more prudent in council, valiant in war, and cunning in the chase, than all the elders of the tribe; and those strange and sweet songs of hers, which had so surprised the white men, were full of mysterious wisdom about the birds, and the animals, and the flowers, and the rivers, which the Sun and the Good Spirit taught her from above.

Amyas had no wish to stay where he was longer than

was absolutely necessary to bring up the sick men from the Orinoco; but this, he well knew, would be a journey probably of some months, and attended with much danger. Cary volunteered at once, however, to undertake the adventure, if half a dozen men would join him, and the Indians would send a few young men to help in working the canoe: but this latter item was not an easy one to obtain; for the tribe with whom they now were, stood in some fear of the fierce and brutal Guahibas, through whose country they must pass; and every Indian tribe, as Amyas knew well enough, looks on each tribe of different language to itself as natural enemies, hateful, and made only to be destroyed wherever met.

Whether it was pride or shyness which kept the maiden aloof, she conquered it after a while; perhaps through mere woman's curiosity, and perhaps, too, from mere longing for amusement in a place so unspeakably stupid as the forest. She gave the English to understand, however, that though they all might be very important personages, none of them was to be her companion but Amyas.

So a harmless friendship sprang up between Amyas and Ayacanora, which soon turned to good account. For she no sooner heard that he needed a crew of Indians, than she consulted the Piache, assembled the tribe, and having retired to her hut, commenced a song which (unless the Piache lied) was a command to furnish young men for Cary's expedition, under penalty of the sovereign displeasure of an evil spirit with an unpronounceable name—an argument which succeeded on the spot, and the canoe departed on its perilous errand.

In time Will returned, safe and sound, and as merry as ever, not having lost a man (though he had had a smart brush with the Guahibas). He brought back three of the wounded men, now pretty nigh cured; the other two, who had lost a leg apiece, had refused to come.

The next day Amyas announced his intention to march once more, and found the men ready enough to move towards the Spanish settlements.

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A fortnight or more has passed in severe toil; but not more severe than they have endured many a time before

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their Indian lad has discovered that a gold-train is going down from Santa Fé toward the Magdalena; and they are waiting for it.

They have pitched their camp among the tree-ferns, above a spot where the path winds along a steep hillside, with a sheer cliff below of many a hundred feet; and Amyas and his crew are as utterly alone, within a few miles of an important Spanish settlement, as they would be in the solitudes of the Orinoco or the Amazon. Having blocked up the road above by felling a large tree across it, they sit there among the flowers chewing coca, in default of food and drink.

At last, up from beneath there was a sharp crack and a loud cry.

"That was a whip's crack," said Yeo, "and a woman's wail. They are close here, my lads !"

"Men !" said Amyas in a low voice, "I trust you all not to shoot till I do. Then give them one arrow, out swords, and at them ! Pass the word along."

Up they came slowly, and all hearts beat loud at their coming.

First, about twenty soldiers, only one half of whom were on foot; the other half being borne, incredible as it may seem, each in a chair on the back of a single Indian, while those who marched had consigned their heaviest armour and their arquebuses into the hands of attendant slaves, who were each pricked on at will by the pike of the soldier behind them.

"Ten shot," counted the business-like Amyas, "and ten pikes; Will can tackle them up above."

Following them came a line of Indians, Negroes, and Zamboes, naked, emaciated, scarred with whips and fetters, and chained together by their left wrists, who toiled upwards, panting and perspiring under the burden of a basket held up by a strap which passed across their foreheads. There were not only old men and youths among them, but women; slender young girls, mothers with children running at their knee; and, at the sight, a low murmur of indignation rose from the ambushed Englishmen.

But the first forty, so Amyas counted, bore on their backs a burden which made all, perhaps, but him and Yeo forget even the wretches who bore it. Each basket

contained a square package of carefully corded hide; the look whereof friend Amyas knew full well.

"What's in they, captain?"

"Gold!" And at that magic word all eyes were strained greedily forward, and such a rustle followed that Amyas, in the very face of detection, had to whisper—

"Be men, be men, or you will spoil all yet!"

The last but one of the chained line was an old grey-headed man, followed by a slender graceful girl of some eighteen years old, and Amyas's heart yearned over them as they came up. Just as they passed, the foremost of the file had rounded the corner above; there was a bustle, and a voice shouted, "Halt, Señors! there is a tree across the path!"

"A tree across the path?" bellowed the officer, while the line of trembling Indians, told to halt above, and driven on by blows below, surged up and down upon the ruinous steps of the Indian road, until the poor old man fell grovelling on his face.

The officer leapt down, and hurried upward to see what had happened. Of course, he came across the old man.

"Grandfather of Beelzebub, is this a place to lie worshipping your fiends?" and he pricked the prostrate wretch with the point of his sword.

The old man tried to rise: but the weight on his head was too much for him; he fell again and lay motionless.

The driver applied the manati-hide across his loins, once, twice, with fearful force; but even that specific was useless.

"*Gastado*, Señor Capitan," said he, with a shrug "Used up. He has been failing these three months!"

"What does the intendant mean by sending me out with worn-out cattle like these? Forward there!" shouted he. "Clear away the tree, Señors, and I'll soon clear the chain. Hold it up, Pedrillo!"

The driver held up the chain, which was fastened to the old man's wrist. The officer stepped back, and flourished round his head a Toledo blade, whose beauty made Amyas break the Tenth Commandment on the spot.

The blade gleamed in the air, once, twice, and fell: not on the chain, but on the wrist which it fettered. There was a shriek—a crimson flash—and the chain and its prisoner were parted indeed.

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One moment more, and Amyas's arrow would have been through the throat of the murderer, who paused, regarding his workmanship with a satisfied smile; but vengeance was not to come from him.

Quick and fierce as a tiger-cat the girl sprang on the ruffian, and with the intense strength of passion, clasped him in her arms, and leaped with him from the narrow ledge into the abyss below.

There was a rush, a shout; all faces were bent over the precipice. The girl hung by her chained wrist: the officer was gone. There was a moment's awful silence; and then Amyas heard his body crashing through the tree-tops far below.

"Haul her up! Hew her in pieces! Burn the witch!" and the driver, seizing the chain, pulled at it with all his might, while all, springing from their chairs, stooped over the brink.

Now was the time for Amyas! Heaven had delivered them into his hands. Swift and sure, at ten yards off, his arrow rushed through the body of the driver, and when, with a roar as of the leaping lion, he sprang like an avenging angel into the midst of the astonished ruffians.

His first thought was for the girl. In a moment, by sheer strength, he had jerked her safely up into the road; while the Spaniards recoiled right and left, fancying him for the moment some mountain giant or supernatural foe. His hurrah undeceived them in an instant, and a cry of "English! Lutheran dogs!" arose, but arose too late. The men of Devon had followed their captain's lead: a storm of arrows left five Spaniards dead, and a dozen more wounded, and down leapt Salvation Yeo, his white hair streaming behind him, with twenty good swords more, and the work of death began.

The Spaniards fought like lions; but they had no time to fix their arquebuses on the crutches; no room, in that narrow path, to use their pikes. The English had the wall of them; and to have the wall there, was to have the life at their mercy. Five desperate minutes, and not a living Spaniard stood upon those steps; and certainly no living one lay in the green abyss below. Two only, who were behind the rest, happening to be in full armour, escaped without mortal wound, and fled down the hill again.

“ After them ! Michael Evans and Simon Heard ; and catch them, if they run a league.”

“ Let not one of them escape ! Slay them as Israel slew Amalek ! ” cried Yeo, as he bent over ; and ere the wretches could reach a place of shelter, an arrow was quivering in each body, as it rolled lifeless down the rocks.

“ Now then ! Loose the Indians ! ”

They found armourer’s tools on one of the dead bodies, and it was done.

“ We are your friends,” said Amyas. “ All we ask is, that you shall help us to carry this gold down to the Magdalena, and then you are free.”

Some few of the younger grovelled at his knees, and kissed his feet, hailing him as the Child of the Sun : but the most part kept a stolid indifference, and when freed from their fetters, sat quietly down where they stood, staring into vacancy. The iron had entered too deeply into their soul. They seemed past hope, enjoyment, even understanding.

“ But, your worship,” said Yeo, “ we must have these rascals’ ordnance.”

“ And their clothes too, Yeo, if we wish to get down the Magdalena unchallenged. Now listen, my masters all ! We have won, by God’s grace, gold enough to serve us the rest of our lives, and that without losing a single man ; and may yet win more, if we be wise, and He thinks good. But oh, my friends, remember Mr. Oxenham and his crew ; and do not make God’s gift our ruin, by faithlessness, or greediness, or any mutinous haste.”

“ You shall find none in us ! ” cried several men. “ We know your worship. We can trust our general.”

“ Thank God ! ” said Amyas. “ Now then, it will be no shame or sin to make the Indians carry it, saving the women, whom God forbid we should burden. But we must pass through the very heart of the Spanish settlements, and by the town of Santa Martha itself. So the clothes and weapons of these Spaniards we must have, let it cost us what labour it may. How many lie in the road ? ”

“ Thirteen here, and about ten up above,” said Cary.

“ Then there are near twenty missing. Who will volunteer to go down over cliff, and bring up the spoil of them ? ”

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"I, and I, and I"; and a dozen stepped out, as they had always when Amyas wanted anything done; for the simple reason, that they knew that he meant to help at the doing of it himself.

"Very well, then, follow me. Sir John, take the Indian and for your interpreter, and try and comfort the souls of these poor heathens. Tell them that they shall all be free. Why, who is that comes up the road?"

All eyes were turned in the direction of which he spoke. And, wonder of wonders! up came none other than the Indian maiden Ayacanora herself, blow-gun in hand, bow on back, and bedecked in all her feather garments, which were rather the worse for a fortnight's woodland travel.

All stood mute with astonishment, as, seeing Amyas, she uttered a cry of joy, quickened her pace into a run, and at last fell panting and exhausted at his feet.

"I have found you!" she said; "you ran away from me, but you could not escape me!" And she fawned round Amyas, like a dog who has found his master, and then sat down on the bank, and burst into wild sobs.

"God help us!" said Amyas, clutching his hair, as he looked down upon the beautiful weeper. "What am I to do with her, over and above all these poor heathens?"

But there was no time to be lost, and over the cliff he scrambled; while the girl, seeing that the main body of the English remained, sat down on a point of rock to watch him.

After half an hour's hard work, the weapons, clothes, and armour of the fallen Spaniards were hauled up the cliff, and distributed in bundles among the men; the rest of the corpses were thrown over the precipice, and they started again upon the road toward the Magdalena, while Yebo snorted like a war-horse who smells the battle at the delight of once more handling powder and ball.

As the cavalcade turned the corner of the mountain, they paused for one last look at the scene of that fearful triumph. Lines of vultures were already streaming out of infinite space, as if created suddenly for the occasion. A few hours and there would be no trace of that fierce fray but a few white bones amid untrodden beds of flowers.

And now Amyas had time to ask Ayacanora the meaning

of this her strange appearance. He wished her anywhere but where she was : but now that she was here, what heart could be so hard as not to take pity on the poor wild thing ? And Amyas as he spoke to her had, perhaps, a tenderness in his tone, from very fear of hurting her, which he never used before. Passionately she told him how she had followed on their track day and night, and had every evening made sounds, as loud as she dared, in hopes of their hearing her, and either waiting for her, or coming back to see what caused the noise.

They soon left the high road ; and for several days held on downwards, hewing their path slowly and painfully through the thick underwood. On the evening of the fourth day, they had reached the margin of a river, at a point where it seemed broad and still enough for navigation. For those three days they had not seen a trace of human beings, and the spot seemed lonely enough for them to encamp without fear of discovery, and begin the making of their canoes.

The next day Amyas assembled the Indians, and told them that they must settle there as best they could : for if they broke up and wandered away, nothing was left for them but to fall one by one into the hands of the Spaniards. They heard him with their usual melancholy and stupid acquiescence, and went and came as they were bid, like animated machines ; but the negroes were of a different temper ; and four or five stout fellows gave Amyas to understand that they had been warriors in their own country, and that warriors they would be still ; and nothing would keep them from Spaniard-hunting ; so, making a virtue of necessity, Amyas asked them whether they would go Spaniard-hunting with him.

This was just what the bold Coromantees wished for ; they grinned and shouted their delight at serving under so great a warrior, and then set to work most gallantly, getting through more in the day than any ten Indians, and indeed than any two Englishmen.

So went on several days, during which the trees were felled, and the process of digging them out began ; while Ayacanora, silent and moody, wandered into the woods all day with her blow-gun, and brought home at evening a load of parrots, monkeys, and curassows ; two or three old hands were sent out to hunt likewise ; so that, what

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th the game and the fish of the river, which seemed exhaustible, and the fruit of the neighbouring palm-trees, there was no lack of food in the camp. But what to do with Ayacanora weighed heavily on the mind of Amyas. One evening, as they were all standing together, Ayacanora came up smiling with the fruit of her day's sport; and Amyas, thinking this a fit opportunity, began carefully prepared harangue to her, which he intended to be altogether soothing, and even pathetic,—to the effect that the maiden was to remain behind when he resumed his journey.

She heard him quietly, her great dark eyes opening wider and wider, her bosom swelling, her stature seeming to grow taller every moment, as she clenched her weapons firmly in both her hands. The last words had hardly passed his lips, when, with a shriek of mingled scorn, rage, and fear, she dashed through the astonished group.

She turned again, and in another minute her gaudy plumes had vanished among the dark forest stems, as swiftly as if she had been a passing bird.

All stood thunderstruck at this unexpected end to the conference. At last Amyas spoke—

“There’s no use in standing here idle, gentlemen. Tarrying after her won’t bring her back. After all, I’m glad she’s gone.”

But the tone of his voice belied his words. Now he had lost her, he wanted her back; and perhaps every one present, except he, guessed why.

But Ayacanora did not return; and ten days more went on in continual toil at the canoes without any news of her from the hunters. Amyas, by the bye, had strictly bidden these last not to follow the girl, not even to speak to her, if they came across her in their wanderings. He was shrewd enough to guess that the only way to cure her sulkeness was to outstulk her; but there was no sign of her presence in any direction; and the canoes being finished at last, the gold, and such provisions as they could collect, were placed on board, and one evening the party prepared for their fresh voyage. They determined to travel as much as possible by night, for fear of discovery, especially in the neighbourhood of the few Spanish settlements which were then scattered along the banks of the main stream.

The sun had sunk; the night had all but fallen; the

men were all on board; Amyas in command of one canoe, Cary of the other. The Indians were grouped on the bank, watching the party with their listless stare, and with them the young guide, who preferred remaining among the Indians, and was made supremely happy by the present of a Spanish sword and an English axe.

"Give way, men," cried Amyas; and as he spoke the paddles dashed into the water, to a right English hurrah ! which sent the birds fluttering from their roosts, and was answered by the yell of a hundred monkeys, and the distant roar of the jaguar.

About twenty yards below, a wooded rock, some ten feet high, hung over the stream. The river was not there more than fifteen yards broad; deep near the rock, shallow on the further side; and Amyas's canoe led the way, within ten feet of the stone.

As he passed, a dark figure leapt from the bushes on the edge, and plunged heavily into the water close to the boat. All started. A jaguar ? No; he would not have missed so short a spring. What, then ? A human being ?

A head rose panting to the surface, and with a few strong strokes, the swimmer had clutched the gunwale. It was Ayacanora !

"Go back !" shouted Amyas. "Go back, girl !"

She uttered the same wild cry with which she had fled into the forest.

"I will die, then !" and she threw up her arms. Another moment, and she had sunk.

To see her perish before his eyes ! who could bear that ? Her hands alone were above the surface. Amyas caught convulsively at her in the darkness, and seized her wrist.

A yell rose from the negroes: a roar from the crew as from a cage of lions. There was a rush and a swirl along the surface of the stream; and "Caiman ! Caiman !" shouted twenty voices.

Now, or never, for the strong arm ! "To larboard, men, or over we go !" cried Amyas, and with one huge heave he lifted the slender body upon the gunwale. Her lower limbs were still in the water, when, within arm's length rose above the stream a huge muzzle. The lower jaw lay flat, the upper reached as high as Amyas's head. He could see the long fangs gleam white in the moonshine

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he could see for one moment, full down the monstrous depths of that great gape, which would have crushed a buffalo. Three inches and no more, from that soft side, the snout surged up——

There was the gleam of an axe from above, a sharp ringing blow, and the jaws came together with a clash which rang from bank to bank. He had missed her ! Swerving beneath the blow, his snout had passed beneath her body, and smashed up against the side of the canoe, as the striker, overbalanced, fell headlong overboard upon the monster's back.

"Who is it ?"

"Yeo !" shouted a dozen.

Man and beast went down together, and where they sank, the moonlight shone on a great swirling eddy, while all held their breaths, and Ayacanora cowered down into the bottom of the canoe, her proud spirit utterly broken.

Another swirl ; a shout from the canoe abreast of them, and Yeo rose, having dived clean under his own boat, and arisen between the two.

"Safe as yet, lads ! Heave me a line, or he'll have me after all."

But ere the brute reappeared, the old man was safe on board.

"The Lord has stood by me," panted he, as he shot the water from his ears. "We went down together : I knew the Indian trick, and being uppermost, had my thumbs in his eyes before he could turn : but he carried me down to the very mud. My breath was nigh gone, so I left go, and struck up : but my toes tingled as I rose again, I'll warrant. There the beggar is, looking for me, I declare !"

And, true enough, there was the huge brute swimming round and round, in search of his lost victim. It was too dark to put an arrow into his eye ; so they paddled on, while Ayacanora crouched silently at Amyas's feet.

"Yeo !" asked he, in a low voice, "what shall we do with her ?"

"Why ask me, sir ?" said the old man, as he had a very good right to ask.

"Because, when one doesn't know oneself, one had best enquire of one's elders. Besides, you saved her life at the risk of your own, and have a right to a voice in the matter, if any one has, old friend."

"Then, my dear young captain, if the Lord puts a precious soul under your care, don't you refuse to bear the burden He lays on you."

Amyas was silent for a while; while Ayacanora, who was evidently utterly exhausted by the night's adventure, and probably by long wanderings, watchings, and weepings which had gone before it, sank with her head against his knee fell fast asleep, and breathed as gently as a child.

CHAPTER XXIV

ONE more glance at the golden tropic sea, and the golden tropic evenings, by the shore of New Granada, in the golden Spanish Main.

The bay of Santa Martha is rippling before the land-freeze one sheet of living flame. The mighty forests are sparkling with myriad fireflies. The lazy mist which unges round the inner hills shines golden in the sunset rays; and, nineteen thousand feet aloft, the mighty peak Horqueta cleaves the abyss of air, rose-red against the dark blue vault of heaven.

The Bishop of Carthagená sat in the state cabin of that great galleon, *The City of the True Cross*, and looked pensively out of the window towards the shore. The good man was in a state of holy calm. His stout figure rested in one easy-chair, his stout ankles on another, beside a table spread with oranges and limes, guavas and pineapples, and all the fruits of Ind.

An Indian girl, bedizened with scarfs and gold chains, kept off the flies with a fan of feathers; and by him, in a bowl of ice from the Horqueta, stood more than one flask of virtuous wine of Alicante. But he was not so selfish, good man, as to enjoy either ice or wine alone; Don Pedro, colonel of the soldiers on board, Don Alvarez, Intendant of his Catholic Majesty's Customs at Santa Martha, and Don Paul, captain of mariners in *The City of the True Cross*, had, by his especial request, come to his assistance that evening, and with two friars, who sat at the lower end of the table, were doing their best to prevent the good man from taking too bitterly to heart the present unsatisfactory state of his cathedral town, which had just been sacked and burnt by an old friend of ours, Sir Francis Drake.

"We have been great sufferers, Señors,—great sufferers, truly; but there shall be a remnant,—ah, a remnant like the shaking of the olive tree and the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done.—Ah! Gold? Yes, I trust Our Lady's mercies are not shut up, nor her arms shortened.—

Look, Señors ! ”—and he pointed majestically out of the window. “ It looks gold ! it smells of gold, as I may say, by a poetical licence. Yea, the very waves, as they ripple past us, sing of gold, gold, gold ! ”

“ It is a great privilege,” said the intendant, “ to have comfort so gracefully administered at once by a churchman and a scholar.”

“ They say,” observed the commandant, “ that a very small plate-fleet will go to Spain this year.”

“ What else ? ” says the intendant. “ What have we to send, in the name of all saints, since these accursed English Lutherans have swept us out clean ? ”

“ And if we had anything to send,” says the sea-captain, “ what have we to send it in ? That fiend incarnate, Drake——”

“ Ah ! ” said his holiness ; “ spare my ears ! Don Pedro, you will oblige my weakness by not mentioning that man ;—his name is Tartarean, unfit for polite lips. Draco—a dragon—serpent—the emblem of Diabolus himself—ah ! ”

“ It will be four years before we can get Carthagena built again. And as for the blockhouse, when we shall get that rebuilt, Heaven only knows, while his Majesty goes on draining the Indies for his English Armada. The town is as naked now as an Indian’s back. Baptista Antonio, the surveyor, has sent home by me a relation to the king, setting forth our defenceless state. But to read a relation and to act on it are two cocks of very different hackles, bishop, as all statesmen know. Heaven grant we may have orders by the next fleet to fortify, or we shall be at the mercy of every English pirate ! ”

“ Ah, well,” said the bishop, “ sacked are we ; and Saint Domingo, as I hear, in worse case than we are ; and Saint Augustine in Florida likewise ; and all that is left for a poor priest like me is to return to Spain, and see whether the pious clemency of his Majesty, and of the universal Father, may not be willing to grant some small relief or bounty to the poor of Mary—perhaps (for who knows ?) to translate to a sphere of more peaceful labour one who is now old. Señors, and weary with many toils—Tita ! fill our glasses. I have saved somewhat—as you may have done, Señors from the general wreck ; and for the flock, when I am no more, illustrious Señors, Heaven’s mercies are infinite

Westward Ho !

w cities will rise from the ashes of the old, new mines
ur forth their treasures into the sanctified laps of the
thful, and new Indians flock toward the life-giving
andard of the Cross, to put on the easy yoke and light
rden of the Church, and—and where shall I be then ?
a, where ? Fain would I rest, and fain depart. Tita !
ng my hammock. Señors, you will excuse age and
firmities.”

When his guests were gone, the old man began mumbling
ayers out of his breviary, and fingering over jewels and
ld, with the dull greedy eyes of covetous old age.

“ Ah !—it may buy the red hat yet !—*Omnia Romæ
alia !* Put it by, Tita, and do not look at it too much,
ild. Enter not into temptation. The love of money is
e root of all evil; and Heaven, in love for the Indian,
s made him poor in this world, that he may be rich in
th. Ah !—Ugh !—So ! ”

And the old miser clambered into his hammock.

It was long past midnight, and the moon was down.
e sentinels, who had tramped and challenged overhead
l they thought their officers were sound asleep, had
pped out of the unwholesome rays of the planet to seek
at health and peace which they considered their right,
d slept as soundly as the bishop's self. •

Presently the cabin door opened gently, and the head
the Señor Intendant appeared.

Tita sat up; and then began crawling like a snake along
e floor, among the chairs and tables, by the light of the
bin lamp.

“ Is he asleep ? ”

“ Yes ! but the casket is under his head.”

“ Curse him ! How shall we take it ? ”

“ I brought him a fresh pillow half an hour ago; I hung
s hammock wrong on purpose that he might want one.
thought to slip the box away as I did it; but the old ox
ursed it in both hands all the while.”

“ What shall we do, in the name of all the fiends ? She
ils to-morrow morning, and then all is lost.”

Tita showed her white teeth, and touched the dagger
hich hung by the intendant's side.

“ I dare not ! ” said the rascal, with a shudder.

“ I dare ! ” said she. “ He whipt my mother, because
e would not give me up to him to be taught in his schools,

when she went to the mines. And she went to the mines and died there in three months. I saw her go, with chain round her neck; but she never came back again. Yes; I dare kill him! I will kill him! I will! I will leap out of the window with the casket, and swim ashore. They will never suspect you, and they will fancy I am drowned."

"The sharks may seize you, Tita. You had better give me the casket."

Tita smiled. "You would not like to lose that, eh? though you care little about losing me. And yet you told me that you loved me!"

"And I do love you, Tita! light of my eyes! life of my heart! I swear by all the saints, I love you. I will marry you, I swear I will!"

"Give me your dagger."

"No, not mine. It may be found. I shall be suspected. What if my sheath were seen to be empty?"

"Your knife will do. His throat is soft enough."

And she glided stealthily as a cat toward the hammock while her cowardly companion stood shivering at the other end of the cabin, and turned his back to her, that he might not see the deed.

A heavy arm from behind clasped his throat. The bishop had broken loose from Tita and seized him! Or was it his ghost? And forgetting all but mere wild terror he opened his lips for a scream, which would have wakened every soul on board. But a handkerchief was thrust into his mouth; and in another minute he found himself bound hand and foot, and laid upon the table by a gigantic enemy. The cabin was full of armed men, two of whom were lashing up the bishop in his hammock; two more had seized Tita; and more were clambering up into the stern gallery beyond, wild figures, with bright blades and armour gleaming in the starlight.

"Now, Will," whispered the giant who had seized him "forward and clap the fore-hatches on; and shout Fire with all your might. Girl! murderess! your life is in my hands. Tell me where the commander sleeps, and I will pardon you."

Tita looked up at the huge speaker, and obeyed in silence. The intendant heard him enter the colonel's cabin, and then a short scuffle, and silence for a moment.

Westward Ho !

But only for a moment; for already the alarm had been given, and mad confusion reigned through every deck. Amyas (for it was none other) had already gained the poop; the sentinels were gagged and bound; and every naked wretch who came trembling up on deck in his shirt by the main hatchway, calling one, "Fire!" another, "Wreck!" and another, "Treason!" was hurled into the scuppers, and there secured.

"Lower away that boat!" shouted Amyas in Spanish to his first batch of prisoners.

The men, unarmed and naked, could but obey.

"Now then, jump in. Here, hand them to the gangway and they come up."

It was done; and as each appeared he was kicked to the scuppers, and bundled down over the side.

"She's full. Cast loose now and off with you. If you try to board again we'll sink you."

"Fire! fire!" shouted Cary, forward. "Up the main hatchway for your lives!"

The ruse succeeded utterly; and before half an hour was over, all the ship's boats which could be lowered were filled with Spaniards in their shirts, getting ashore as best they could.

"Get the main and foresail up, Will!" said Amyas, "cut the cable; and we will plume the quarry as we fly."

"Spoken like a good falconer. Heaven grant that this woodcock may carry a good trail inside!"

"I'll warrant her for that," said Jack Brimblecombe. "She floats so low."

"Much of your build, too, Jack. By the bye, where is the commander?"

Alas! Don Pedro, forgotten in the bustle, had been lying on the deck in his shirt, helplessly bound. Which most discourteous act seemed at first likely to be somewhat heavily avenged on Amyas; for as he spoke, a couple of liver-shots, fired from under the poop, passed "ping" "ping" by his ears, and Cary clapped his hand to his side. "Hurt, Will?"

"A pinch, old lad—Look out, or we are *allen verloren* for all, as the Flemings say."

And as he spoke, a rush forward on the poop drove two of their best men down the ladder into the waist, where Amyas stood.

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"Killed?" asked he, as he picked one up, who had fallen head over heels.

"Sound as a bell, sir : but they Gentiles has got hold of the firearms, and set the captain free."

And rubbing the back of his head for a minute, he jumped up the ladder again, shouting—

"Have at ye, idolatrous pagans ! Have at ye !"

Amyas jumped up after him, shouting to all hands to follow; for there was no time to be lost.

Out of the windows of the poop, which looked on the main deck, a galling fire had been opened, and he could not afford to lose men; for, as far as he knew, the Spaniards left on board might still far outnumber the English; so up he sprang on the poop, followed by a dozen men, and there began a very heavy fight between two parties of valiant warriors, who easily knew each other apart by the peculiar fashion of their armour. For the Spaniards fought in their shirts, and in no other garments : but the English in all other manner of garments, tag, rag, and bobtail; and yet had never a shirt among them.

The rest of the English made a rush, of course, to get upon the poop, seeing that the Spaniards could not shoot them through the deck; but the fire from the windows was so hot, that although they dodged behind masts, spars, and every possible shelter, one or two dropped; and Jack Brimblecombe and Yeo took on themselves to call retreat, and with about a dozen men, got back, and held a council of war.

What was to be done ? Their arquebuses were of little use ; for the Spaniards were behind a strong bulkhead. There were cannon : but where was powder or shot. The boats, encouraged by the clamour on deck, were paddling alongside again. Yeo rushed round and round, probing every gun with his sword.

"Here's a patararo loaded ! Now for a mate lads."

Luckily one of the English had kept his match alight during the scuffle.

"Thanks be ! Help me to unship the gun—the mass in the way here."

The patararo, or brass swivel, was unshipped.

"Steady, lads, and keep it level, or you'll shake out the priming. Ship it here; turn out that one, and heave

into that boat, if they come alongside. Steady now—so ! Rummage about, and find me a bolt or two, a marlinspike, anything. Quick, or the captain will be overmastered yet.”

Missiles were found—odds and ends—and crammed into the swivel up to the muzzle : and, in another minute, its “ cargo of notions ” was crashing into the poop-windows, silencing the fire from thence effectually enough for the time.

“ Now, then, a rush forward, and right in along the deck ! ” shouted Yeo ; and the whole party charged through the cabin-doors, which their shot had burst open, and hewed their way from room to room.

In the meanwhile, the Spaniards above had fought fiercely : but, in spite of superior numbers, they had gradually given back. And by the time that Brimblecombe and Yeo shouted from the stern-gallery below that the quarter-deck was won, few on either side but had their shrewd scratch to show.

“ Yield, Señor ! ” shouted Amyas to the commander, who had been fighting like a lion, back to back with the captain of mariners.

“ Never ! You have bound me, and insulted me ! Your blood or mine must wipe out the stain ! ”

And he rushed on Amyas. There was a few moments' heavy fence between them ; and then Amyas cut right at his head. But as he raised his arm, the Spaniard's blade slipped along his ribs, and snapped against the point of his shoulder-blade. An inch more to the left, and it would have been through his heart. The blow fell, nevertheless, and the commandant fell with it, stunned by the flat of the sword, but not wounded ; for Amyas's hand had turned, as he winced from his wound. But the sea-captain, seeing Amyas stagger, sprang at him, and, seizing him by the wrist, ere he could raise his sword again, shortened his weapon to run him through. Amyas made a grasp at his wrist in return, but, between his faintness and the darkness, missed it. Another moment, and all would have been over.

A bright blade flashed past Amyas's ear ; the sea-captain's grasp loosened, and he dropped a corpse ; while over him, like an angry lioness above her prey, stood Ayacanora, her long hair floating in the wind, her dagger

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raised aloft, as she looked round, challenging all and every one to approach.

"Are you hurt?" panted she.

"A scratch, child.—What do you do here? Go back, go back."

Ayacanora slipped back like a scolded child and vanished in the darkness.

The battle was over. The Spaniards, seeing their commanders fall, laid down their arms and cried for quarter. It was given: the poor fellows were tied together, two and two, and seated in a row on the deck; the commandant, sorely bruised, yielded himself perforce; and the galleon was taken.

It was impossible, till morning dawned, either to get matters into any order, or to overhaul the prize they had taken; and many of the men were so much exhausted that they fell fast asleep on the deck ere the surgeon had time to dress their wounds. However, Amyas contrived, when once the ship was leaping merrily, close-hauled against a fresh land-breeze, to count his little flock, and found out of the forty-four but six seriously wounded, and none killed. However, their working numbers were now reduced to thirty-eight, beside the four negroes, a scanty crew enough to take home such a ship to England.

"Mustering the men, boatswain, and count them," said Amyas.

"All here, sir, but the six poor fellows who are laid forward."

"Now, my men, for three years you and I have wandered on the face of the earth, seeking our fortune, and we have found it at last, thanks be to God! Now, what was our promise and vow which we made to God beneath the tree of Guayra, if He should grant us good fortune, and bring us home again with a prize? Was it not that the dead should share with the living; and that every man's portion, if he fell, should go to his widow or his orphans, if he had none, to his parents?"

"It was, sir," said Yeo, "and I trust that the Lord will give these men grace to keep their vow. They have seen enough of His providences by this time to fear Him."

"I doubt them not; but I remind them of it. The Lord has put into our hands a rich prize; and what with the gold which we have already, we are well paid for all our labours. Let us thank Him with fervent hearts as so

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as the sun rises; and in the meanwhile, remember all, that whosoever plunders on his private account, robs not the adventurers merely, but the orphan and the widow, which is to rob God. For me, lest you should think me covetous, I could claim my brother's share; but I hereby give it up freely into the common stock, for the use of the whole ship's crew, who have stood by me through weal and woe, as men never stood before, as I believe, by any captain. So now to prayers, lads, and then to eat our breakfast."

So to prayers they went; after which Brimblecombe contrived to inspire the black cook and the Portuguese steward with such energy that, by seven o'clock, the latter worthy appeared on deck, and with profound reverences, announced to "The most excellent and heroical Señor Adelantado Captain Englishman," that breakfast was ready in the state-cabin.

"You will do us the honour of accompanying us as our guest, sir, or our host, if you prefer the title," said Amyas to the commandant, who stood by.

"Pardon, Señor; but honour forbids me to eat with one who has offered to me the indelible insult of bonds."

"Oh!" said Amyas, taking off his hat, "then pray accept on the spot my humble apologies for all which has passed, and my assurances that the indignities which you have unfortunately endured were owing altogether to the necessities of war, and not to any wish to hurt the feelings of so valiant a soldier and gentleman."

"It is enough, Señor," said the commandant, bowing and shrugging his shoulders—for, indeed, he too was very hungry. •

So they went down, and found the bishop, who was by this time unbound, seated in a corner of the cabin, his hands fallen on his knees, his eyes staring on vacancy, while the two priests stood as close against the wall as they could squeeze themselves, keeping up a ceaseless mutter of prayers.

"Your holiness will breakfast with us, of course; and these two frocked gentlemen likewise. I see no reason for refusing them all hospitality, as yet."

There was a marked emphasis on the last two words, which made both monks wince.

"Our chaplain will attend to you, gentlemen. His lordship the bishop will do me the honour of sitting next to me."

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The bishop seemed to revive slowly as he snuffed the savoury steam; and at last, rising mechanically, subsided into the chair which Amyas offered him on his left, while the commandant sat on his right.

"A little of this kid, my lord? No—ah—Friday, I recollect. Some of that turtle-fin, then. Will, serve his lordship; pass the cassava-bread up, Jack! Señor Commandant! a glass of wine? You need it after your valiant toils. To the health of all brave soldiers—and a toast from your own Spanish proverb, 'To-day to me, to-morrow to thee!'"

"I drink it, brave Señor. Your courtesy shows you the worthy countryman of General Drake, and his brave lieutenant."

"Drake! Did you know him, Señor?" asked all the Englishmen at once.

"Do you not know, sir, that he and his fleet, only last year, swept the whole of this coast, and took, with shame I confess it, Carthagena, San Domingo, St. Augustine, and —I see you are too courteous, Señors, to express before me what you have a right to feel. But whence come you, sir? From the skies, or the depths of the sea? Where is your ship? I thought that all Drake's squadron had left six months ago."

"Our ship, Señor, has lain this three years rotting on the coast near Cape Codera."

And Amyas told his story, from the landing at Guaymas to the passage down the Magdalena.

"My Lord Bishop," continued Amyas, "do you know that had we not taken this ship when we did, you had lost not merely money as you have now, but life itself?"

"Money? I had none to lose! Life?—what do you mean?" asked the bishop, turning very pale.

"This, sir. That it ill befits one to lie, whose throat has been saved from the assassin's knife but four hours since. When we entered the stern-gallery, we found two persons, now on board this ship, in the very act, sir, an article, of cutting your sinful throat, that they might rob you of the casket which lay beneath your pillow. A moment more, and you were dead. We seized and bound them, and so saved your life. Is that plain, sir?"

The bishop looked steadfastly and stupidly into Amyas's face, heaved a deep sigh, and gradually sank back in his chair, dropping the glass from his hand.

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"He is in a fit ! Call in the surgeon ! Run !" and up jumped kind-hearted Jack, and brought in the surgeon of the galleon.

"Is this possible, Señor ?" asked the commandant.

"It is true. Door, there ! Evans ! go and bring in that rascal whom we left bound in his cabin !"

Evans went, and the commandant continued—

"But the stern-gallery ? How, in the name of all witches and miracles, came your valour thither ?"

"Simply enough, and owing neither to witch nor miracle. The night before last we passed the mouth of the bay in two canoes, which we had lashed together after the fashion I had seen in the Moluccas, to keep them afloat in the surf. We had scraped the canoes bright the day before, and rubbed them with white clay, that they might be invisible at night; and so we got safely to the Morro Grande, passing within half a mile of your ship."

"Oh ! my scoundrels of sentinels !"

"We landed at the back of the Morro, and lay there all day, being purposed to do that which, with your pardon, we have done. We took our sails of Indian cloth, whitened them likewise with clay which we had brought with us from the river, and laid them over us on the canoes, paddling from underneath them. So that, had your sentinels been awake, they would have hardly made us out, till we were close on board. We had provided ourselves, instead of ladders, with bamboos rigged with cross-pieces, and a hook of strong wood at the top of each; they hang at your stern-gallery now. And the rest of the tale I need not tell you."

The commandant rose in his courtly Spanish way—

"Your admirable story, Señor, proves to me how truly your nation, while it has yet, and I trust will ever have, to dispute the palm of valour with our own, is famed throughout the world for ingenuity, and for daring beyond that of mortal man. You have succeeded, valiant Captain, because you have deserved to succeed."

"You are, like your nation, only too generous, Señor. But what noise is that outside ? Cary, go and see."

But ere Cary could reach the door, it was opened; and Evans presented himself with a terrified face.

"Here's villainy, sir ! The Don's murdered, and cold; the Indian lass fled; and as we searched the ship for her,

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we found an Englishwoman, as I'm a sinful man !—and a shocking sight she is to see ! ”

“ An Englishwoman ? ” cried all three, springing forward.

“ Bring her in ! ” said Amyas, turning very pale; and as he spoke, Yeo and another led into the cabin a figure scarcely human.

An elderly woman, dressed in the yellow “ San Benito ” of the Inquisition, with ragged grey locks hanging about a countenance distorted by suffering, and shrunk by famine. Painfully, as one unaccustomed to the light, she peered and blinked round her.

Amyas stood silent with fear and horror; some instinct told him that he was on the point of hearing news for which he feared to ask. But Jack spoke—

“ My dear soul ! my dear soul ! don't you be afraid; and the Lord will stand by you, if you will but tell the truth. We are all Englishmen, and men of Devon; and this ship is ours.”

“ Devon ? ” she said doubtingly; “ Devon ! Whence then ? ”

“ Biddeford men. This is Mr. Will Cary, to Clovelly. I you are a Devon woman, you've heard tell of the Carys to be sure.”

The woman made a rush forward, and threw her fettered arms round Will's neck—

“ Oh, Mr. Cary, my dear life ! Mr. Cary ! and so you be Oh, dear soul alive ! but you're burnt so brown, and I be 'most blind with misery. Oh, who ever sent you here, my dear Mr. Will, then, to save a poor wretch from the pit ! ”

“ Who on earth are you ? ”

“ Lucy Passmore, the white witch to Welcombe. Don't you mind Lucy Passmore, as charmed your warts for you when you was a boy ? ”

“ Lucy Passmore ! ” almost shrieked all three friends
“ She that went off with——”

“ Yes ! she that sold her own soul, and persuaded the dear saint to sell hers; she that did the devil's work, and has taken the devil's wages;—after this fashion ! ” and she held up her scarred wrists wildly.

“ Where is Doña de—Rose Salterne ? ” shouted Will and Jack.

“ Where is my brother Frank ? ” shouted Amyas.

“ Dead, dead, dead ! ”

"I knew it," said Amyas, sitting down again calmly.

"How did she die?"

"The Inquisition—he!" pointing to the monk. "Ask him—he betrayed her to her death. And ask him!" pointing to the bishop; "he sat by her and saw her die."

"Woman, you rave!" said the bishop, getting up with a terrified air, and moving as far as possible from Amyas.

"How did my brother die, Lucy?" asked Amyas, still calmly.

"Who be you, sir?"

A gleam of hope flashed across Amyas—she had not answered his question.

"I am Amyas Leigh of Burrough. Do you know aught of my brother Frank, who was lost at La Guayra?"

"Mr. Amyas! Heaven forgive me that I did not know the bigness of you. Your brother, sir, died like a gentleman as he was."

"But how?" gasped Amyas.

"Burned with her, sir!"

"Is this true, sir?" said Amyas, turning to the bishop, with a very quiet voice.

"I, sir?" stammered he, in panting haste. "I had nothing to do—I was compelled in my office of bishop to be an unwilling spectator—the secular arm, sir; I could not interfere with that—any more than I can with the Holy Office. I do not belong to it—ask that gentleman—sir! Saints and angels, sir! what are you going to do?" shrieked he, as Amyas laid a heavy hand upon his shoulder, and began to lead him towards the door.

"Hang you!" said Amyas. "If I had been a Spaniard and a priest like yourself, I should have burnt you alive."

"Hang me?" shrieked the wretched old Balaam; and burst into abject howls for mercy.

"Take the dark monk, Yeo, and hang him too. Lucy Passmore, do you know that fellow also?"

"No, sir," said Lucy.

"Lucky for you, Fray Gerundio," said Will Cary; while the good friar hid his face in his hands, and burst into tears. Lucky it was for him, indeed: for he had been a pitying spectator of the tragedy. "Ah!" thought he, "if life in this mad and sinful world be a reward, perhaps this escape is vouchsafed to me for having pleaded the cause of the poor Indian!"

"Clearaway that running rigging!" said Amyas, while

the dark Dominican stood perfectly collected, with something of a smile of pity at the miserable bishop. A man accustomed to cruelty, and firm in his fanaticism, he was as ready to endure suffering as to inflict it; repeating to himself the necessary prayers, he called Fray Gerundio to witness that he died, however unworthy, a martyr, in charity with all men, and in the communion of the Holy Catholic Church; and then, as he fitted the cord to his own neck, gave Fray Gerundio various petty commissions about his sister and her children, and a little vineyard far away upon the sunny slopes of Castile; and so died, with a *Domine, in manus tuas*, like a valiant man of Spain.

Amyas stood long in solemn silence, watching the two corpses dangling above his head. At last he drew a long breath, as if a load were taken off his heart, and went to look for Lucy Passmore, whom the sailors were nursing and feeding, while Ayacanora watched them with a puzzled face.

"I will talk to you when you are better, Lucy," said he, taking her hand. "Now you must eat and drink, and forget all among us lads of Devon."

"Oh, dear blessed sir, and you will send Sir John to pray with me? For I turned, sir, I turned: but I could not help it—I could not a-bear the torments: but she bore them, sweet angel—and more than I did. Oh, dear me!"

"Lucy, I am not fit now to hear more. You shall tell me all to-morrow"; and he turned away.

Scrap by scrap, as weakness and confusion of intellect permitted her, Lucy Passmore told her story. It was a simple one after all, and Amyas might almost have guessed it for himself. Rose had not yielded to the Spaniards without a struggle. He had visited her two or three times at Lucy's house (how he found out Lucy's existence she herself could never tell, unless from the Jesuits) before she agreed to go with him. He had gained Lucy to his side by huge promises of Indian gold; and, in fine, they had gone to Lundy, where the lovers were married by a priest, who was none other, Lucy would swear, than the shorter and stouter of the two who had carried off her husband and his boat—in a word, Father Parsons.

They sailed from Lundy in a Portugal ship, were at Lisbon a few days (during which Rose and Lucy remained on board), and then away for the West Indies; where all went merry as a marriage bell. "Sir, he would have

kissed the dust off her dear feet, till that evil eye of Mr. Eustace's came, no one knew how or whence." And, from that time, all went wrong. Eustace got power over Don Guzman, whether by threatening that the marriage should be dissolved, whether by working on his superstitious scruples about leaving his wife still a heretic, or whether (and this last Lucy much suspected) by insinuations that her heart was still at home in England, and that she was longing for Amyas and his ship to come and take her home again; the house soon became a den of misery, and Eustace the presiding evil genius. Then came preparations to meet the English, and high words about it between Don Guzman and Rose; till, a few days before Amyas's arrival, the Don had dashed out of the house in a fury, saying openly that she preferred these Lutheran dogs to him, and that he would have their hearts' blood first, and hers after.

The rest was soon told. Amyas knew but too much of it already. The very morning after he had gone up to the villa, Lucy and her mistress were taken (they knew not by whom) down to the quay, in the name of the Holy Office, and shipped off to Carthagen.

There they were examined, and confronted on a charge of witchcraft, which the wretched Lucy could not well deny. She was tortured to make her inculcate Rose; and what she said, or did not say, under the torture, the poor wretch could never tell. She recanted, and became a Romanist; Rose remained firm. Three weeks afterwards, they were brought out to an Auto-da-Fé; and there, for the first time, Lucy saw Frank walking, dressed in a San Benito, in that ghastly procession. Lucy was adjudged to receive publicly two hundred stripes, and to be sent to "The Holy House" at Seville to perpetual prison. Frank and Rose were sentenced to death as impenitent, and delivered over to the secular arm, with prayers that there might be no shedding of blood. In compliance with which request, Frank and Rose were burnt at the stake. She thought they did not feel it more than twenty minutes. They were both very bold and steadfast, and held each other's hand (that she would swear to) to the very last.

And so ended Lucy Passmore's story. And if Amyas Leigh, after he had heard it, vowed afresh to give no quarter to Spaniards wherever he should find them, who can wonder, even if they blame?

CHAPTER XXV

AYACANORA took up her abode in Lucy's cabin, as a regularly accredited member of the crew.

But a most troublesome member. For the warrior-prophetess of the Omaguas soon became, to all appearance, nothing but a very naughty child; and after she had satisfied her simple wonder at the great floating house by rambling from deck to deck, and peeping into every cupboard and cranny, manifested a great propensity to steal and hide (she was too proud or too shy to ask for) every trumpery which smit her fancy; and when Amyas forbade her to take anything without leave, threatened to drown herself, and went off and sulked all day in her cabin.

Poor Amyas had many a brains-beating as to how he was to tame a lady who, on the least provocation, took refuge in suicide. Punish her he dare not, even if he had the heart. And as for putting her ashore, he had an instinct, and surely not a superstitious one, that the strange affection for the English was not unsent by Heaven, and that God had committed her into his charge, and that He would require an account at his hands of the soul of that fair lost lamb.

At last the matter, as most things luckily do, came to a climax; and it came in this way.

The ship had been slipping along now for many a day slowly but steadily before a favourable breeze. She had passed the ring of the West India islands, and was now crawling, safe from all pursuit, through the vast weed beds of the Sargasso Sea. There, for the first time, it was thought safe to relax the discipline which had been hitherto kept up, and to "rummage" (as was the word in those days) their noble prize. What they found, of gold and silver, jewels, and merchandise, will interest no readers suffice it to say, that there was enough there, with the other treasure, to make Amyas rich for life, after the claims of Cary's and the crew, not forgetting Mr. Salterne third, as owner of the ship, had been paid off. But in the captain's cabin were found two chests, one full

gorgeous Mexican feather dresses, and the other of Spanish and East Indian finery, which, having come by way of Havanna and Carthagená, was going on, it seemed, to some Señora or other at the Caraccas. Which two chests were, at Cary's proposal, voted amid the acclamations of the crew to Ayacanora, as her due and fit share of the pillage, in consideration of her Amazonian prowess and valuable services.

So the poor child took greedy possession of the trumpery, had them carried into Lucy's cabin, and there knelt gloating over them many an hour. The Mexican work she chose to despise as savage; but the Spanish dresses were a treasure; and for two or three days she appeared on the quarter-deck, sunning herself like a peacock before the eyes of Amyas in Seville mantillas, Madrid hats, Indian brocade farthingales, and I know not how many other gewgaws, and dare not say how put on.

The crew tittered. Amyas would have spoken, but he was afraid : however, the evil brought its own cure. The pageant went on, as its actor thought, most successfully for three days or so; but at last the dupe, unable to contain herself longer, appealed to Amyas—"Ayacanora quite English girl now; is she not?"—heard a titter behind her, looked round, saw a dozen honest faces in broad grin, comprehended all in a moment, darted down the companion-ladder, and vanished.

Amyas, fully expecting her to jump overboard, followed as fast as he could. He tried to comfort the poor child, assured her that the men should never laugh at her again; "But then," added he, "you must not be so—so——." What to say he hardly knew.

"So what?" asked she, crying more bitterly than ever.

"So like a wild girl, Ayacanora."

Her hands dropped on her knees : a strong spasm ran through her throat and bosom, and she fell on her knees before him, and looked up imploringly in his face.

"Yes; wild girl—poor, bad, wild girl. . . . But I will be English girl now!"

"Fine clothes will never make you English, my child," said Amyas.

"No! not English clothes—English heart! Good heart, like yours! Yes, I will be good, and Sir John shall teach me!"

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"There's my good maid," said Amyas. "Sir John shall begin and teach you to-morrow."

"No! Now! now! Ayacanora cannot wait. She will drown herself if she is bad another day! Come, now!"

And she made him fetch Brimblecombe, heard the honest fellow patiently for an hour or more, and told Lucy that very night all that he had said. And from that day, whenever Jack went in to read and pray with the poor sufferer, Ayacanora, instead of escaping on deck as before, stood patiently trying to make it all out, and knelt when he knelt, and tried to pray too—that she might have an English heart; and doubtless her prayers, dumb as they were, were not unheard.

So went on a few days more, hopefully enough, till one morning, just after they had passed the Sargasso-beds. The men were all on deck under the awning, tinkering, and cobbling, and chatting; while the ship slipped on quietly and silently as ever, save when Ayacanora laughed and clapped her hands at the flying-fish scudding from the bonitos. At last, tired of doing nothing, she went forward to the poop-rail to listen to John Squire the armourer, who sat tinkering a headpiece, and humming a song concerning his native place—

"Oh, Bideford is a pleasant place, it shines where it stands,
And the more I look upon it, the more my heart it warms;
For there are fair young lasses, in rows upon the quay,
To welcome gallant mariners, when they come home from say."

Here Yeo broke in—

"Aren't you ashamed, John Squire, to your years singing such carnal vanities, after all the providences you have seen? Let the songs of Zion be in your mouth, man, if you must needs keep a caterwauling all day like that."

"You sing 'em yourself then, gunner."

"Well," says Yeo, "and why not?" And out he pulled his psalm-book, and began a scrap of the grand old psalm—

"Such as in ships and brittle barks
Into the seas descend,
Their merchandise through fearful flood
To compass and to end;
There men are forced to behold
The Lord's works what they be;
And in the dreadful deep the same,
Most marvellous they see."

"Humph !" said John Squire. "Very good and godly: but still I du like a merry catch now and then, I du. Wouldn't you let a body sing 'Rumbelow'—even when he's heaving of the anchor?"

"Well, I don't know," said Yeo; "but the Lord's people had better praise the Lord then too, and pray for a good voyage, instead of howling about—

"A randy, dandy, dandy O,
A whet of ale and brandy O,
With a rumbelow and a Westward-ho !
And heave, my mariners all, O !"

'Is that fit talk for immortal souls? How does that child's-trade sound beside the Psalms, John Squire?"

Now it befell that Salvation Yeo, for the very purpose of holding up to ridicule that time-honoured melody, had put into it the true nasal twang, and rung it out as merrily as he had done perhaps twelve years before, when he got up John Oxenham's anchor in Plymouth Sound. And it befell also that Ayacanora, as she stood by Amyas's side, watching the men, and trying to make out their chat, heard it, and started; and then, half to herself, took up the strain, and sang it over again, word for word, in the very same tune and tone.

Salvation Yeo started in his turn, and turned deadly pale.

"Who sung that?" he asked quickly.

"The little maid here. She's coming on nicely in her English," said Amyas.

"The little maid?" said Yeo, turning paler still. "Why do you go about to scare an old servant by talking of little maids, Captain Amyas? Well," he said aloud to himself, "as I am a sinful saint, if I hadn't seen where the voice came from, I could have sworn it was her; just as we taught her to sing it by the river there, I and William Penberthy of Marazion, my good comrade. The Lord have mercy on me!"

All were silent as the grave whenever Yeo made any allusion to that lost child. Ayacanora only, pleased with Amyas's commendation, went humming on to herself—

"And heave my mariners all, O !"

Yeo started up from the gun where he sat. "I can't a-bear it! As I live, I can't! You, Indian maiden, where did you learn to sing that there?"

Westward Ho !

Ayacanora looked up at him, half frightened by his vehemence, then at Amyas, to see if she had been doing anything wrong; and then turned saucily away, looked over the side, and hummed on.

"Ask her, for mercy's sake—ask her, Captain Leigh!"

"My child," said Amyas, speaking in Indian, "how is it you sing that so much better than any other English? Did you ever hear it before?"

Ayacanora looked up at him puzzled, and shook her head, and then—

"If you tell Indian to Ayacanora, she dumb. She must be English girl now, like poor Lucy."

"Well then," said Amyas, "do you recollect, Ayacanora—do you recollect—what shall I say? anything that happened when you were a little girl?"

She paused a while; and then moving her hands overhead—

"Trees—great trees like the Magdalena—always nothing but trees—wild and bad everything. Ayacanora won't talk about that."

"Do you mind anything that grew on those trees?" asked Yeo eagerly.

She laughed. "Silly! Flowers and fruit, and nuts—grow on all trees, and monkey-cups too. Ayacanora climbed up after them—when she was wild. I won't tell any more."

"But who taught you to call them monkey-cups?" asked Yeo, trembling with excitement.

"Monkey's drink; mono drink."

"Mono?" said Yeo, foiled on one cast, and now trying another. "How did you know the beasts were called monos?"

"She might have heard it coming down with us," said Cary, who had joined the group.

"Ay, mono," said she, in a self-justifying tone. "Face like little men, and tails. And one very dirty black one with a beard, say Amen in a tree to all the other monkey just like Sir John on Sunday."

This allusion to Brimblecombe and the preaching upset all but old Yeo.

"But don't you recollect any Christians?—white people!"

She was silent.

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"Don't you mind a white lady?"

"Um?"

"A woman, a very pretty woman, with hair like his?"
pointing to Amyas.

"No."

"What do you mind, then, besides those Indians?"
added Yeo, in despair.

She turned her back on him peevishly as if tired with the efforts of her memory.

"Do try to remember," said Amyas; and she set to work again at once.

"Ayacanora mind great monkeys—black, oh, so high," and she held up her hand above her head, and made a violent gesture of disgust.

"Monkeys? what, with tails?"

"No, like man. Ah! yes—just like Cooky there—dirty Cooky!"

And that hapless son of Ham, who happened to be just crossing the main deck, heard a marlinspike, which by ill luck was lying at hand, flying past his ears.

"Ayacanora, if you heave any more things at Cooky, I must have you whipped," said Amyas, without, of course, any such intention.

"I'll kill you then," answered she, in the most matter-of-fact tone.

"She must mean negurs," said Yeo; "I wonder where she saw them, now. What if it were they Cimaroons?"

"But why should any one who had seen whites forget them, and yet remember negroes?" asked Cary:

"Let us try again. Do you mind no great monkeys but those black ones?" asked Amyas.

"Yes," she said, after a while,— "Devil."

"Devil?" asked all three, who, of course, were by no means free from the belief that the fiend did actually appear to the Indian conjurers, such as had brought up the girl.

"Ay, him Sir John tell about on Sundays."

"Save and help us!" said Yeo: "and what was he like unto?"

She made various signs to intimate that he had a monkey's face, and a grey beard like Yeo's. So far so good: but now came a series of manipulations about her pretty little neck, which set all their fancies at fault.

Westward Ho !

"I know," said Cary at last, bursting into a great laugh. "Sir Urian had a ruff on, as I live ! Trunk-hose, too, my fair dame ? Stop—I'll make sure. Was his neck like the Señor Commandant's, the Spaniard ?"

Ayacanora clapped her hands at finding herself understood, and the questioning went on.

"The 'Devil' appeared like a monkey, with a grey beard, in a ruff;—humph !——"

"Ay !" said she, in good enough Spanish, "Mono de Panama; viejo diablo de Panama."

Yeo threw up his hands with a shriek—

"O Lord of all mercies ! Those were the last words of Mr. John Oxenham ! Ay—and the Devil is surely none other than the devil Don Francisco Xararte ! Oh dear ! oh dear ! oh dear ! my sweet young lady ! my pretty little maid ! and don't you know me ? Don't you know Salvation Yeo, that carried you over the mountains, and used to climb for the monkey-cups for you, my dear young lady ?"

And the honest fellow, falling on his knees, covered Ayacanora's hands with kisses; while all the crew, fancying him gone suddenly mad, crowded aft.

"Do you remember anything of all this, my child ?" asked Amyas gently.

She lifted up her eyes suddenly to his, with a look of imploring agony, as if beseeching him to spare her. The death of a whole old life, the birth of a whole new life, was struggling in that beautiful face, choking in that magnificent throat, as she threw back her small head, and drew in her breath, and dashed her locks back from her temples, as if seeking for fresh air. She shuddered, reeled, then fell weeping on the bosom, not of Salvation Yeo, but of Amyas Leigh.

He stood still a minute or two, bearing that fair burden ere he could recollect himself. Then—

"Ayacanora, you are not yet mistress of yourself, my child. You were better to go down, and see after poor Lucy, and we will talk about it all to-morrow."

She gathered herself up instantly, and with eyes fixed on the deck slid through the group, and disappeared below.

"Ah !" said Yeo, with a tone of exquisite sadness, "the young to the young ! Over land and sea, in the

Westward Ho !

forests and in the galleys, in battle and prison, I have sought her ! And now !——”

“My good friend,” said Amyas, “neither are you master of yourself yet. When she comes round again, whom will she love and thank but you ? ”

“You, sir ! She owes all to you ; and so do I. Let me go below, sir. My old wits are shaky. Bless you, sir, and thank you for ever and ever ! ”

And Yeo grasped Amyas's hand, and went down to his cabin, from which he did not reappear for many hours.

From that day Ayacanora was a new creature. The thought that she was an Englishwoman ; that she, the wild Indian, was really one of the great white people whom she had learned to worship ; carried in it some regenerating change : she regained all her former stateliness, and with it a self-restraint, a temperance, a softness which she had never shown before. The crew, of course, though they were a little vexed at losing their pet, consoled themselves with the thought that she was a “real born lady,” and Mr. Oxenham's daughter, too ; and there was not a man on board who did not prick up his ears for a message if she approached him, or one who would not have, I verily believe, jumped overboard to do her a pleasure.

So homeward they ran, before a favouring south-west breeze : but long ere they were within sight of land, Lucy Passmore was gone to her rest beneath the Atlantic waves.

CHAPTER XXVI

It is the evening of the 15th of February 1587, and Mrs. Leigh (for we must return now to old scenes and old faces) is pacing slowly up and down the terrace-walk at Burrough, looking out over the winding river, and the hazy sandhills, and the wide western sea, as she has done every evening, be it fair weather or foul, for three weary years. Three years and more are past and gone, and yet no news of Frank and Amyas, and the gallant ship and all the gallant souls therein; and loving eyes in Bideford and Appledore, Clovelly and Ilfracombe, have grown hollow with watching and with weeping for those who have sailed away into the West, as John Oxenham sailed before them, and have vanished like a dream, as he did, into the infinite unknown.

Her hair was now grown grey; her cheeks were wan; her step was feeble. She seldom went from home, save to the church, and to the neighbouring cottages. She never mentioned her sons' names; never allowed a word to pass her lips, which might betoken that she thought of them; but every day, when the tide was high, and the red flag on the sandhills showed that there was water over the bar, she paced the terrace-walk, and devoured with greedy eyes the sea beyond, in search of the sail which never came.

This evening Northam is in a stir. The pebble-ridge is thundering far below, as it thundered years ago: but Northam is noisy enough without the rolling of the surge. The tower is rocking with the pealing bells: the people are all in the streets shouting and singing round bonfires and drinking to the Queen's health. The hills are re-echoed with bonfires in every village; and far away, the bells of Bideford are answering the bells of Northam, as they answered them seven years ago, when Amyas returned from sailing round the world. For this day has come the news that Mary Queen of Scots is beheaded in Fother-

ingay; and all England, like a dreamer who shakes off some hideous nightmare, has leapt up in one tremendous shout of jubilation as the terror and the danger of seventeen anxious years is lifted from its heart for ever.

And Mrs. Leigh, Protestant as she is, breathes a prayer, that the Lord may have mercy on that soul, as "clear as diamond, and as hard," as she said of herself. That last scene, too, before the fatal block—it could not be altogether acting. Mrs. Leigh had learned many a priceless lesson in the last seven years—might not Mary Stuart have learned something in seventeen? And she shuddered, and sighed to herself—"To whom little is given, of them shall little be required!" But still the bells pealed on and would not cease.

What was that which answered them from afar out of the fast darkening twilight? A flash, and then the thunder of a gun at sea.

Mrs. Leigh stopped. The flash was right outside the bar. A ship in distress it could not be. The wind was light and westerly. It was a high spring-tide, as evening floods are always there. What could it be? Another flash, another gun. The noisy folks of Northam were hushed at once, and all hurried into the churchyard which looks down on the broad flats and the river.

There was a gallant ship outside the bar. She was running in, too, with all sails set. A large ship; nearly a thousand tons she might be; but not of English rig. What was the meaning of it?

The strange sail passed out of sight behind the hill of Appledore; and then there rose into the quiet evening air a cheer, as from a hundred throats. Mrs. Leigh stood still, and listened. Another gun thundered among the hills; and then another cheer.

It might have been twenty minutes before the vessel hove in sight again round the dark rocks of the Hubbastone, as she turned up the Bideford river. Mrs. Leigh had stood the whole time perfectly motionless, a pale and scarcely breathing statue, her eyes fixed upon the Viking's rock.

Round the Hubbastone she came at last. There was music on board, drums and fifes, shawms and trumpets, which wakened ringing echoes from every knoll of wood and slab of slate. And as she opened full on Burrough

House, another cheer burst from her crew, and rolled up to the hills from off the silver waters far below, full a mile away.

Mrs. Leigh walked quickly towards the house, and called her maid—

“ Grace, bring me my hood. Master Amyas is come home ! ”

And Mrs. Leigh, with Grace behind her, started with rapid steps towards Bideford.

As they came down Bridgeland Street (where afterwards the tobacco warehouses for the Virginia trade used to stand, but which then was but a row of rope-walks and sailmakers' shops) they could see the strange ship already at anchor in the river. They had just reached the lower end of the street, when round the corner swept a great mob, sailors, women, 'prentices, hurrahing, questioning, weeping, laughing : Mrs. Leigh stopped; and behold, they stopped also.

“ Here she is ! ” shouted some one; “ here's his mother ! ”

“ His mother ? Not their mother ! ” said Mrs. Leigh to herself, and turned very pale; but that heart was long past breaking.

The next moment the giant head and shoulders of Amyas, far above the crowd, swept round the corner.

“ Make a way ! Make room for Madam Leigh ! ”—And Amyas fell on his knees at her feet.

She threw her arms round his neck, and bent her fair head over his, while sailors, 'prentices, and coarse harbour-women were hushed into holy silence, and made a ring round the mother and the son.

Mrs. Leigh asked no question. She saw that Amyas was alone.

At last he whispered, “ I would have died to save him mother, if I could.”

“ You need not tell me that, Amyas Leigh, my son.”

Another silence.

“ How did he die ? ” whispered Mrs. Leigh.

“ He is a martyr. He died in the——”

Amyas could say no more.

“ The Inquisition ? ”

“ Yes.”

A strong shudder passed through Mrs. Leigh's frame, and then she lifted up her head.

"Come home, Amyas. I little expected such an honour—such an honour—ha ! ha ! and such a fair young martyr, too; a very St. Stephen ! God have mercy on me; and let me not go mad before these folk, when I ought to be thanking Thee for Thy great mercies ! Amyas, who is that ?"

And she pointed to Ayacanora, who stood close behind Amyas, watching with keen eyes the whole.

"She is a poor wild Indian girl—my daughter, I call her. I will tell you her story hereafter."

"Your daughter ? My granddaughter, then. Come hither, maiden, and be my granddaughter."

Ayacanora came obedient, and knelt down, because she had seen Amyas kneel.

"God forbid, child ! kneel not to me. Come home, and let me know whether I am sane or mazed, alive or dead."

And drawing her hood over her face, she turned to go back, holding Amyas tight by one hand, and Ayacanora by the other.

The crowd let them depart some twenty yards in respectful silence, and then burst into a cheer which made the old town ring.

Mrs. Leigh stopped suddenly.

"I had forgotten, Amyas. You must not let me stand in the way of your duty. Where are your men ?"

"Kissed to death by this time; all of them, that is, who are left."

"Left ?"

"We went out a hundred, mother, and we came home forty-four—if we are at home. Is it a dream, mother ? Is this you ? and this old Bridgeland Street again ? As I live, there stands Evans the smith, at his door, tankard in hand, as he did when I was a boy !"

The brawny smith came across the street to them; but stopped when he saw Amyas, but no Frank.

"Better one than neither, madam !" said he, trying a rough comfort. Amyas shook his hand as he passed him; but Mrs. Leigh neither heard nor saw him, nor any one.

And home the two went arm in arm together, while Ayacanora held fast, like a child, by the skirt of Mrs. Leigh's cloak.

Her story was soon told to Mrs. Leigh, who of course, woman-like, would not allow a doubt as to her identity. And then, with the iron nerve which good women have, she made him give her every detail of Lucy Passmore's story, and of all which had happened from the day of their sailing to that luckless night at Guayra. And when it was done, she led Ayacanora out, and began busying herself about the girl's comforts, as calmly as if Frank and Amyas had been sleeping in their cribs in the next room.

But she had hardly gone upstairs, when a loud knock at the door was followed by its opening hastily; and into the hall burst, regardless of etiquette, the tall and stately figure of Sir Richard Grenville.

Amyas dropped on his knees instinctively. The stern warrior was quite unmanned; and as he bent over his godson, a tear dropped from that iron cheek, upon the iron cheek of Amyas Leigh.

"My lad ! my glorious lad ! and where have you been ? Get up, and tell me all. The sailors told me a little, but I must hear every word. I knew you would do something grand. I told your mother you were too good a workman for God to throw away. Now, let me have the whole story. Why, I am out of breath. To tell truth, I ran three parts of the way hither."

And down the two sat, and Amyas talked long into the night; while Sir Richard, his usual stateliness recovered, smiled stern approval at each deed of daring.

Amyas went the next day to Salterne, and told his tale. The old man had heard the outlines of it already : but he calmly bade him sit down, and listened to all, his chin upon his hands, his elbows on his knees. His cheek never blanched, his lips never quivered throughout.

Amyas told the whole with downcast eyes, and then stole a look at his hearer's face. There was no sign of emotion : only somewhat of a proud smile curled the corners of that iron mouth.

"And her husband ?" asked he, after a pause.

"I am ashamed to have to tell you, sir, that the man still lives."

"Still lives, sir ?"

"Too true, as far as I know. That it was not my fault my story bears me witness."

"Sir, I never doubted your will to kill him. Still live

you say? Well, so do rats and adders. And now, I suppose, Captain Leigh, your worship is minded to recruit yourself on shore a while before having another dash at the devil and his kin!"

"I am minded to do one thing, Mr. Salterne, and that is, to kill Spaniards, in fair fight, by land and sea, where-soever I shall meet them. And, therefore, I stay not long here, whithersoever I may be bound next."

That evening a messenger from Bideford came running breathless up to Burrough Court. The authorities wanted Amyas's immediate attendance, for he was one of the last, it seemed, who had seen Mr. Salterne alive.

Salterne had gone over, as soon as Amyas departed, to an old acquaintance; signed and sealed his will in their presence with a firm and cheerful countenance, refusing all condolence; and then gone home, and locked himself into Rose's room. Supper-time came and he did not appear. The apprentices could not make him answer, and at last called in the neighbours, and forced the door. Salterne was kneeling by his daughter's bed; his head was upon the coverlet; his Prayer-book was open before him at the Burial Service; his hands were clasped in supplication; but he was dead and cold.

His will lay by him. He had left all his property among his poor relations, saving and excepting all money, etc., due to him as owner and part-adventurer of the ship *Rose*, and his new bark of three hundred tons burden, now lying East-the-water; all which was bequeathed to Captain Amyas Leigh, on condition that he should re-christen that bark the *Vengeance*, fit her out with part of the treasure, and with her sail once more against the Spaniard, before three years were past.

And this was the end of William Salterne, merchant.

CHAPTER XXVII

AND now Amyas is settled quietly at home again; and for the next twelve months little passes worthy of record in these pages. Yeo has installed himself as major-domo, with no very definite functions, save those of walking about everywhere at Amyas's heels like a lank grey wolf-hound, and spending his evenings at the fire-side, as a true old sailor does, with his Bible on his knee, and his hands busy in manufacturing numberless nick-nacks, useful and useless, for every member of the family, and above all for Ayacanora.

But though Amyas lay idle, England did not, for now we are approaching the year 1588, "which an astronomer of Königsberg, above a hundred years before, foretold would be an admirable year, and the German chronologers presaged would be the climacterical year of the world."

The prophecies may stand for what they are worth; but for the wise, there needed no conjunction of planets to tell them that the day was near at hand when the long desultory duel between Spain and England would end, once and for all, in some great death-grapple. The war, as yet, had been confined to the Netherlands, to the West Indies, and the coasts and isles of Africa; to the quarters, in fact, where Spain was held either to have no rights, or to have forfeited them by tyranny. But Spain itself had been respected by England, as England had by Spain; and trade to Spanish ports went on as usual, till, in the year 1585, the Spaniard, without warning laid an embargo on all English ships coming to his European shores. They were to be seized, it seemed to form part of an enormous armament, which was to attack and crush, once and for all—whom? The rebellious Netherlands, said the Spaniards: but the Queen, the ministry, and, when it was just not too late the people of England, thought otherwise. England was the destined victim; so, instead of negotiating, in order to avoid fighting, they fought in order to produce negotiation.

Elizabeth began negotiating; but fancy not that she does nothing more, as the following letter testifies, written about Midsummer, 1587 :—

“ F. Drake to Captain Amyas Leigh. This with haste.

“ DEAR LAD,

“ As I said to her most glorious Majesty, I say to you now. There are two ways of facing an enemy. The one to stand off, and cry, ‘ Try that again and I’ll strike thee ’; the other to strike him first, and then, ‘ Try that at all, and I’ll strike thee again.’ Of which latter counsel her Majesty so far approves, that I go forthwith (tell it not in Gath) down the coast, to singe the King of Spain’s beard (so I termed it to her Majesty, she laughing), in which if I leave so much as a fishing-boat afloat from the Groyne unto Cadiz, it will not be with my good will, who intend that if he come this year, he shall come by swimming and not by sailing. So if you are still the man I have known you, bring a good ship round to Plymouth within the month, and away with me for hard blows and hard money, the best of both of which you know pretty well by now. Thine lovingly,

“ F. DRAKE.”

Amyas clutched his locks over this letter, and smoked more tobacco the day he got it than had ever before been consumed at once in England. But he kept true to his promise; and this was his reply :—

*“ Amyas Leigh to the Worshipful Sir F. Drake,
Admiral of her Majesty’s Fleet in Plymouth.*

“ MOST HONOURABLE SIR,

“ A magician keeps me here, in bilboes for which you have no picklock; namely, a mother who forbids. The loss is mine; but Antichrist I can fight any year (for he will not die this bout, nor the next), while my mother—but I will not trouble your patience more than to ask from you to get me news, if you can, from any prisoners of one Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto; whether he is in Spain or in the Indies; and what the villain does, and where he is to be found. This only I entreat of you, and so remain behind with a heavy

heart.—Yours to command in all else, and I would to Heaven, in this also,

“ AMYAS LEIGH.”

January 1587–8 had wellnigh run through, before Sir Richard Grenville made his appearance on the streets of Bideford. He had been appointed in November one of the council of war for providing for the safety of the nation, and the West Country had seen nothing of him since. But one morning, just before Christmas, his stately figure darkened the old bay-window at Burrough, and Amyas rushed out to meet him, and bring him in, and ask what news from Court.

“ All good news, dear lad, and dearer madam. Amyas, has Raleigh written to you of late ? ”

“ Not a word, and I wonder why.”

“ Well, no wonder at that, if you knew how he has been labouring. The wonder is, whence he got the knowledge wherewith to labour; for he never saw sea-work to my remembrance.”

“ Never saw a shot fired by sea, except ours at Smerwick, and that brush with the Spaniards in 1579, when he sailed for Virginia with Sir Humphrey; and he was a mere crack then.”

“ So you consider him as your pupil, eh ? But he learnt enough in the Netherland wars, and in Ireland too, if not of the strength of ships, yet still of the weakness of land forces; and would you believe it, the man has twisted the whole council round his finger, and made them give up the land defences to the naval ones.”

“ Then here is his health, the health of a true friend to all bold mariners, and myself in particular ! But where is he now ? ”

“ Coming here to-morrow, as I hope—for he left London with me, and so down by us into Cornwall, to drill the train-bands, as he is bound to do, being Seneschal of the Duchies and Lieutenant-General of the county.”

“ Besides Lord Warden of the Stanneries ! How the man thrives ! ” said Mrs. Leigh.

“ How the man deserves to thrive ! ” said Amyas “ but what are we to do ? ”

“ That is the rub. I would fain stay and fight the Spaniards.”

"So would I; and will."

"But he has other plans in his head for us."

"We can make our own plans without his help."

"Heyday, Amyas! How long? When did he ask you to do a thing yet and you refuse him?"

"Not often, certainly: but Spaniards I must fight."

"Well, so must I, boy: but I have given a sort of promise to him, nevertheless."

"Not for me too, I hope?"

"No: he will extract that himself when he comes; you must come and sup to-morrow, and talk it over."

"Be talked over, rather. What chestnut does the cat want us monkeys to pull out of the fire for him now, I wonder?"

"Sir Richard Grenville is hardly accustomed to be called a monkey," said Mrs. Leigh.

"I meant no harm; and his worship knows it, none better: but where is Raleigh going to send us, with a murrain?"

"To Virginia. The settlers must have help: and, as I trust in God, we shall be back again long before this armament can bestir itself."

So Raleigh came, saw, and conquered. Mrs. Leigh consented to Amyas's going (for his twelvemonth would be over ere the fleet could start) upon so peaceful and useful an errand; and the next five months were spent in continual labour on the part of Amyas and Grenville, till seven ships were all but ready in Bideford river, the admiral whereof was Amyas Leigh.

But that fleet was not destined ever to see the shores of the New World: it had nobler work to do (if Americans will forgive the speech) than even settling the United States.

It was in the long June evenings, in the year 1588; Mrs. Leigh sat in the open window, busy at her needle-work; Ayacanora sat opposite to her, on the seat of the bay, trying diligently to read *The History of the Nine Worthies*, and stealing a glance every now and then towards the garden, where Amyas stalked up and down as he had used to do in happier days gone by. But his brow was contracted now, his eyes fixed on the ground, as he plodded backwards and forwards, his hands behind his back, and a huge cigar in his mouth, the wonder of

the little boys of Northam, who peeped in stealthily as they passed the iron-work gates, to see the back of the famous fire-breathing captain who had sailed round the world and been in the country of headless men and flying dragons, and then popped back their heads suddenly as he turned towards them in his walk.

There was a loud hurried knocking at the door, and in another minute a serving-man hurried in with a letter.

"This to Captain Amyas Leigh with haste, haste!"

It was Sir Richard's hand. Amyas tore it open; and a "loud laugh laughed he."

"The Armada is coming! My wish has come true, mother!"

"God help us, it has! Show me the letter."

It was a hurried scrawl.

"D^r. GODSON,

"Walsingham sends word that the A^{da} sailed from Lisbon to the Groyne the 18. of May. We know no more, but have commandment to stay the ships. Come down, dear lad, and give us counsel; and may the Lord help His Church in this great strait.—Your loving godfather,

"R. G."

"Forgive me, mother, mother, once for all!" cried Amyas, throwing his arms round her neck.

"I have nothing to forgive, my son, my son! And shall I lose thee, also?"

"If I be killed, you will have two martyrs of your blood, mother!—"

Mrs. Leigh bowed her head, and was silent. Amyas caught up his hat and sword, and darted forth toward Bideford.

Ere two days were past, most of the neighbouring gentlemen, summoned by Sir Richard, had come in, and great was the bidding against each other as to who should do most. Cary and Brimblecombe, with thirty tall Clovelly men, came across the bay, and without even asking leave of Amyas, took up their berth as a matter of course on board the *Vengeance*. In the meanwhile, the matter was taken up by families. The Fortescues (a numberless clan) offered to furnish a ship; the Chichesters another, the Stukelys a third; while the

merchantmen were not backward. The Bucks, the Stranges, the Heards, joyfully unloaded their Virginian goods, and replaced them with powder and shot; and in a week's time the whole seven were ready once more for sea, and dropped down into Appledore pool, with Amyas as their admiral for the time being (for Sir Richard had gone by land to Plymouth to join the deliberations there), and waited for the first favourable wind to start for the rendezvous in the Sound.

At last, upon the twenty-first of June, the clank of the capstans rang merrily across the flats, and amid prayers and blessings, forth sailed that gallant squadron over the bar, to play their part in Britain's Salamis.

CHAPTER XXVIII

IN the little terrace bowling-green behind the Pelican Inn, at Plymouth, on the afternoon of the nineteenth of July, was gathered almost every notable man of the English fleet. The Armada has been scattered by a storm. Lord Howard has been out to look for it, as far as the Spanish coast; but the wind has shifted to the south, and fearing lest the Dons should pass him, he has returned to Plymouth, uncertain whether the Armada will come after all or not. Slip on for a while, like Prince Hal, the drawer's apron; come in through the rose-clad door which opens from the tavern, with a tray of long-necked Dutch glasses, and a silver tankard of wine, and look round you at the gallant captains, who are waiting for the Spanish Armada, as lions in their lair might wait for the passing herd of deer.

See those five talking earnestly, in the centre of a ring which longs to overhear, and yet is too respectful to approach close. Those soft long eyes and pointed chin you recognize already; they are Walter Raleigh's. The fair young man in the flame-coloured doublet, whose arm is round Raleigh's neck, is Lord Sheffield; opposite them stands, by the side of Sir Richard Grenville, a man as stately even as he, Lord Sheffield's uncle, the Lord Charles Howard of Effingham, Lord High Admiral of England; next to him is his son-in-law, Sir Robert Southwell, captain of the *Elizabeth Jonas*: but who that short, sturdy, plainly-dressed man, who stands with legs a little apart, and hands behind his back, looking up, with keen grey eyes, into the face of each speaker? His cap is in his hands, so you can see the bullet head, crisp brown hair and the wrinkled forehead, as well as the high cheek-bones, the short square face, the broad temples, the thick lips, which are yet firm as granite. A coarse plebeian stamp of man: yet the whole figure and attitude are that of boundless determination, self-possession, energy; and when at last he speaks a few blunt words, all eyes are turned respectfully upon him; for his name is Francis Drake.

A burly, grizzled elder, in greasy sea-stained garments, contrasting oddly with the huge gold chain about his neck, waddles up as if he had been born, and had lived ever since, in a gale of wind at sea. The upper half of his sharp dogged visage seems of brick-red leather, the lower of badger's fur; and as he claps Drake on the back, and, with a broad Devon twang, shouts, "Be you a-coming to drink your wine, Francis Drake, or be you not?—saving your presence, my Lord," the Lord High Admiral only laughs, and bids Drake go and drink his wine; for John Hawkins, Admiral of the port, is the Patriarch of Plymouth seamen, if Drake be their hero, and says and does pretty much what he likes in any company on earth.

So they push through the crowd, wherein is many another man whom one would gladly have spoken with face to face on earth. Martin Frobisher and John Davis are sitting on that bench, smoking tobacco from long silver pipes; and by them are Fenton and Withrington, who have both tried to follow Drake's path round the world, and failed, though by no fault of their own. The man who pledges them better luck next time, is George Fenner, known to "the seven Portugals," Leicester's poet, and captain of the galleon which Elizabeth bought of him. The short prim man in the huge yellow ruff, with sharp chin, minute imperial, and self-satisfied smile, is Richard Hawkins, the Complete Seaman, Admiral John's hereafter famous and hapless son. The elder who is talking with him is his good uncle William, whose monument still stands, or should stand, in Deptford Church; for Admiral John set it up there but one year after this time.

There is John Drake, Sir Francis's brother, ancestor of the present stock of Drakes; and there is George, his nephew, a man not overwise, who has been round the world with Amyas; and there is Amyas himself, talking to one who answers him with fierce curt sentences, Captain Barker of Bristol, brother of the hapless Andrew Barker who found John Oxenham's guns, and, owing to a mutiny among his men, perished by the Spaniards in Honduras, twelve years ago. Barker is now captain of the *Victory*, one of the Queen's best ships; and he has his accounts to settle with the Dons, as Amyas has; so they

Westward Ho !

are both growling together in a corner, while all the rest are as merry as the flies upon the vine above their heads.

At length the talk of all the groups is interrupted by an explosion from old John Hawkins.

"Fail? Fail? What a murrain do you here, to talk of failing? Who made you a prophet, you scurvy, hang-in-the-wind, croaking, white-livered son of a corby-crow?"

"Heaven help us, Admiral Hawkins, who has put fire to your culverins in this fashion?" said Lord Howard.

"Who? my Lord! Croakers! my Lord! Here's a fellow calls himself the captain of a ship, and her Majesty's servant, and talks about failing. Blurt for him, sneak-up! say I."

"Admiral John Hawkins," quoth the offender, "you shall answer this language with your sword."

"I'll answer it with my foot; and buy me a pair of horn-tips to my shoes, like a wraxling man. Fight a croaker? Fight a frog, an owl! I fight those that dare fight, sir!"

"Sir, sir, moderate yourself. I am sure this gentleman will show himself as brave as any, when it comes to blows but who can blame a mortal man for trembling before so fearful a chance as this?"

"Let mortal man keep his tremblings to himself then, my Lord, and not be like Solomon's madmen casting abroad fire and death, and saying, it is only sport. There is more than one of his kidney, your Lordship, who have not been ashamed to play Mother Shipton before their own sailors, and damp the poor fellows' hearts with crying before they're hurt; and this is one of them. I've heard him at it afore, and I'll present him with a vengeance, though I'm no churchwarden."

Hawkins, having blown off his steam, went back to Drake and the bowls.

"Fill my pipe, drawer—that croaking fellow's made me let it out, of course! Spoil-sports! The father of all manner of troubles on earth, be they noxious trade-croakers! 'Better to meet a bear robbed of her whelp than a fule who can keep his mouth shut. Who com'th here now?"

"Captain Fleming, as I'm a sinner."

"Fleming? Is he tired of life, that he com'th here to look for a halter? I've a warrant out against mun, for robbing of two Flushingers on the high seas now this very last year. Is the fellow mazed or drunk, then? or has he seen a ghost? Look to mun!"

The man was a rough-bearded old sea-dog, who had just burst in from the tavern through the low hatch, upsetting a drawer with all his glasses, and now came panting and blowing straight up to the High Admiral—"My Lord, my Lord! They'm coming! I saw them off the Lizard last night!"

"Who? my good sir, who seem to have left your manners behind you."

"The Armada, your worship—the Spaniard; but as for my manners, 'tis no fault of mine, for I never had none to leave behind me."

"Sirrah," said Lord Howard, "is this no fetch, to cheat us out of your pardon for these piracies of yours?"

"You'll find out for yourself before nightfall, my Lord High Admiral. All Jack Fleming says, that this is a poor sort of an answer to a man who has put his own neck in the halter for the sake of his country."

"Perhaps it is," said Lord Howard. "And after all, gentlemen, what can this man gain by a lie, which must be discovered ere a day is over, except a more certain hanging?"

"Very true, your Lordship," said Hawkins, mollified. "Come here, Jack Fleming—what wilt drain, man? Hippocras or Alicant, Sack or John Barleycorn, and a pledge to thy repentance and amendment of life."

"Admiral Hawkins, Admiral Hawkins, this is no time for drinking."

"Why not, then, my Lord? Good news should be welcomed with good wine. Frank, send down to the sexton, and set the bells a-ringing to cheer up all the honest hearts. Why, my Lord, if it were not for the gravity of my office, I could dance a galliard for joy!"

"Well, you may dance, Port Admiral: but I must go and plan, but God give to all captains such a heart as yours this day!"

"And God give all generals such a head as yours!"

Westward Ho !

Come, Frank Drake, we'll play the game out before we move. It will be two good days before we shall be fit to tackle them, so an odd half-hour don't matter."

"I must command the help of your counsel, Vice-Admiral," said Lord Charles, turning to Drake.

"And it's this, my good Lord," said Drake, looking up, as he aimed his bowl. "They'll come soon enough for us to show them sport, and yet slow enough for us to be ready; so let no man hurry himself. And as example is better than precept, here goes."

Lord Howard shrugged his shoulders, and departed, knowing two things: first, that to move Drake was to move mountains; and next, that when the self-taught hero did bestir himself, he would do more work in an hour than any one else in a day. So he departed, followed hastily by most of the captains; and Drake said in a low voice to Hawkins—

"Does he think we are going to knock about on a lee-shore all the afternoon and run our noses at night—and dead up-wind, too—into the Dons' mouths? No, Jack, my friend. Let Orlando-Furioso-punctilio-fire eaters go and get their knuckles rapped. The following game is the game, and not the meeting one. The dog goes after the sheep, and not afore them, lad. Let them go by, and go by, and stick to them well to windward, and pick up stragglers, and pickings, too, Jack—the prizes Jack!"

"Trust my old eyes for not being over-quick at seeing signals, if I be hanging in the skirts of a fat-looking Don. We'm the eagles, Drake; and where the carcass is, 's our place, eh?"

And so the two old sea-dogs chatted on, while the companions dropped off one by one, and only Amyas remained.

"Eh, Captain Leigh, where's my boy Dick?"

"Gone off with his lordship, Sir John."

"On his punctilios too, I suppose, the young slashes brecks. He's half a Don, that fellow, with his fine scholarship, and his fine manners, and his fine clothes. He'll get a taking down before he dies, unless he mends. Why ain't you gone too, sir?"

"I follow my leader," said Amyas, filling his pipe.

"Well said, my big man," quoth Drake. "If I cou

lead you round the world, I can lead you up channel, can't I?—Eh? my little bantam-cock of the Orinoco?"

"There, Vice-Admiral, you're beaten, and that's the rubber. Pay up three dollars, old high-flyer, and go and earn more, like an honest adventurer."

"Well," said Drake, as he pulled out his purse, "we'll walk down now, and see about these young hotheads. As I live, they are setting to tow the ships out already! Breaking the men's backs over-night, to make them fight the lustier in the morning! Well, well, they haven't sailed round the world, Jack Hawkins."

"Or had to run home from St. Juan d'Ulloa with half a crew."

"Well, if we haven't to run out with half crews. I saw a sight of our lads drunk about this morning."

"The more reason for waiting till they be sober. Besides if everybody's caranting about to once, each after his own men, nobody'll find nothing in such a scrimmage as that. Bye, bye, all. We'm going to blow the Dons up now in earnest."

CHAPTER XXIX

AND now began that great sea-fight which was to determine whether Popery and despotism, or Protestantism and freedom, were the law which God had appointed for the half of Europe, and the whole of future America. It is a twelve days' epic, worthy, not of dull prose, but of the thunder-roll of Homer's verse: but having to tell it, I must do my best, rather using, where I can, the words of contemporary authors than my own.

"The Lord High Admiral of England, sending a pinace before, called the *Defiance*, denounced war by discharging her ordnance; and presently approaching within musket-shot, with much thundering out of his own ship, called the *Arkroyall* (*alias* the *Triumph*), first set upon the Admirall's, as he thought, of the Spaniards (but it was Alfonso de Leon's ship). Soon after, Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher played stoutly with their ordnance on the hindmost squadron, which was commanded by Recalde." The Spaniards soon discover the superior "nimbleness of the English ships"; and Recalde's squadron, finding that they are getting more than they give, in spite of his endeavours, hurry forward to join the rest of the fleet. Medina the Admiral, finding his ships scattering fast, gathers them into a half-moon and the Armada tries to keep solemn way forward, like a stately herd of buffaloes, who march on across the prairie, disdaining to notice the wolves which snarl around their track. But in vain. These are no wolves but cunning hunters swiftly horsed, and keenly armed and who will "shamefully shuffle" (to use Drake's own expression) that vast herd from the Lizard to Portland from Portland to Calais Roads; and who, even in the short two hours' fight, have made many a Spaniard question the boasted invincibleness of this Armada.

One of the four great galliasses is already riddled with shot, to the great disarrangement of her "pulpit chapels," and friars therein assistant. The fleet has

close round her, or Drake and Hawkins will sink her; in effecting which manœuvre, the "principal galleon of Seville," in which are Pedro de Valdez and a host of blue-blooded Dons, runs foul of her neighbour, carries away her foremast, and is, in spite of Spanish chivalry, left to her fate.

So ends the first day; not an English ship, hardly a man, is hurt. It has destroyed for ever in English minds the prestige of boastful Spain. Amyas and the other Bideford ships have been right busy for two hours knocking holes in a huge galleon, which carries on her poop a maiden with a wheel, and bears the name of *Sta. Catharina*. She had a coat of arms on the flag at her sprit, probably those of the commandant of soldiers; but they were shot away early in the fight, so Amyas cannot tell whether they were De Soto's or not. Nevertheless, there is plenty of time for private revenge; and Amyas, called off at last by the Admiral's signal, goes to bed and sleeps soundly.

But ere he has been in his hammock an hour, he is awakened by Cary's coming down to ask for orders.

"We were to follow Drake's lantern, Amyas; but where it is I can't see, unless he has been taken up aloft there among the stars for a new Drakium Sidus."

Amyas turns out grumbling: but no lantern is to be seen; only a sudden explosion and a great fire on board some Spaniard, which is gradually got under, while they have to lie-to the whole night long, with nearly the whole fleet.

The next morning finds them off Torbay; and Amyas is hailed by a pinnace, bringing a letter from Drake, which (saving the spelling, which was somewhat arbitrary, like most men's in those days) ran somewhat thus—

"DEAR LAD,

"I have been wool-gathering all night after five great hulks, which the Pixies transfigured overnight into galleons, and this morning again into German merchantmen. I let them go with my blessing; and coming back, fell in (God be thanked!) with Valdez' great galleon; and in it good booty, which the Dons his fellows had left behind, like faithful and valiant comrades, and the Lord Howard had let slip past him, thinking her deserted by

her crew. I have sent to Dartmouth a sight of noblemen and gentlemen, maybe a half hundred; and Valdez himself, who when I sent my pinnace aboard must needs stand on his punctilios, and propound conditions. I answered him, I had no time to tell with him; if he would needs die, then I was the very man for him; if he would live, then, better give in. He sends again, boasting that he was Don Pedro Valdez, and that it stood not with his honour, and that of the Dons in his company. I replied, that for my part, I was Francis Drake, and my matches burning. Whereon he finds in my name salve for the wounds of his own, and comes aboard, kissing my fist, with Spanish lies of holding himself fortunate that he had fallen into the hands of fortunate Drake, and much more, which he might have kept to cool his porridge. But I have much news from him (for he is a leaky tub); and among others, this, that your Don Guzman is aboard of the *Sta. Catharina*, commandant of her soldiery, and has his arms flying at her sprit, beside *Sta. Catharina* at the poop, which is a maiden with a wheel, and is a lofty built ship of 3 tier of ordnance from which God preserve you, and send you like luck with

“Your deare Friend and Admirall,

“F. DRAKE.”

“*Sta. Catharina*! why, that was the galleon we hampered all yesterday!” said Amyas, stamping on the deck.

“Of course it was. Well, we shall find her again doubt not. That cunning old Drake! how he has contrived to line his own pockets, even though he had to keep the whole fleet waiting for him.”

The fleet did not find Lord Howard till nightfall; he and Lord Sheffield had been holding on steadfastly the whole night after the Spanish lanterns, with two ships only. Soon a large Spaniard drifts by, deserted and partly burnt. Some of the men are for leaving their place to board her; but Amyas stoutly refuses. He has “come out to fight, and not to plunder; so let the nearest ship to her have her luck without grudging.” They pass on, and the men pull long faces when they see the galleon snapped up by their next neighbour, and towed off to Weymouth, where she proves to be the ship of Miguel

d'Oquenda, the Vice-Admiral, which they saw last night, all but blown up by some desperate Netherland gunner, who, being "misused," was minded to pay off old scores on his tyrants.

And so ends the second day; while the Portland rises higher and clearer every hour. The next morning finds them off the island. Will they try Portsmouth, though they have spared Plymouth? The wind has shifted to the north, and blows clear and cool off the white-walled downs of Weymouth Bay. The Spaniards turn and face the English. They must mean to stand off and on until the wind shall change, and then to try for the Needles. At least, they shall have some work to do before they round Purbeck Isle.

The English go to the westward again: but it is only to return on the opposite tack; and now begins a series of manœuvres, each fleet trying to get the wind of the other; but the struggle does not last long, and ere noon the English fleet have slipped close-hauled between the Armada and the land, and are coming down upon them right before the wind.

And now begins a fight most fierce and fell. "And fight they did confusedly, and with variable fortunes; while, on the one hand, the English manfully rescued the ships of London, which were hemmed in by the Spaniards; and, on the other side, the Spaniards as stoutly delivered Recalde, being in danger." Never was heard such thundering of ordnance on both sides, which notwithstanding from the Spaniards flew for the most part over the English without harm. Only Cock, an Englishman (whom Prince claims, I hope rightfully, as a worthy of Devon), "died with honour in the midst of the enemies in a small ship of his. For the English ships, being far the lesser, charged the enemy with marvellous agility; and having discharged their broadsides, flew forth presently into the deep, and levelled their shot directly, without missing, at those great and unwieldy Spanish ships." "This was the most furious and bloody skirmish of all" (though ending only, it seems, in the capture of a great Venetian and some small craft), "in which the Lord Admiral fighting amidst his enemies' fleet and seeing one of his captains afar off (Fenner by name, he who fought the seven Portugals at the Azores), cried

‘O George, what doest thou? Wilt thou now frustrate my hope and opinion conceived of thee? Wilt thou forsake me now?’ With which words he being enflamed, approached, and did the part of a most valiant captain”; as, indeed, did all the rest.

The sun goes down upon a glassy sea, and rises on a glassy sea again. But what day is this? The twenty-fifth, St. James’s day, sacred to the patron saint of Spain. Shall nothing be attempted in his honour by those whose forefathers have so often seen him with their bodily eyes, charging in their van upon his snow-white steed, and scattering Paynims with celestial lance? He might have sent them, certainly, a favouring breeze; perhaps he only means to try their faith; at least the galleys shall attack; and in their van three of the great galliasses (the fourth lies half-crippled among the fleet thrash the sea to foam with three hundred oars apiece and see, not St. James leading them to victory, but Lord Howard’s *Triumph*, his brother’s *Lion*, Southwell’s *Elizabeth Jonas*, Lord Sheffield’s *Bear*, Barker’s *Victory*, and George Fenner’s *Leicester*, towed stoutly out, to meet them with such salvoes of chain-shot, smashing oars, and cutting rigging, that had not the wind sprung up again toward noon, and the Spanish fleet come up to rescue them, they had shared the fate of Valdez and the Biscayan. And now the fight becomes general. Frobisher beats down the Spanish Admiral’s mainmast and, attacked himself by Mexia and Recalde, is rescued by Lord Howard; who, himself endangered in his turn, is rescued in his turn; “while after that day” (so sickened were they of the English gunnery), “no galliassé would adventure to fight.”

And so, with variable fortune, the fight thunders on the livelong afternoon, beneath the virgin cliffs of Freshwater; while myriad seafowl rise screaming up from every ledge, and spot with their black wings the snow-white wall of chalk; and the lone shepherd hurries down the slopes above to peer over the dizzy edge, and forget the wheatear fluttering in his snare while he gazes trembling upon glimpses of tall masts and gorgeous flags piercing at times the league-broad veil of sulphur-smoke which welters far below.

So fares St. James’s day, and the Armada, “gatherin

itself into a roundel," will fight no more, but make the best of its way to Calais, where perhaps the Guises' action may have a French force ready to assist them, and then to Dunkirk, to join with Parma and the great militia of the Netherlands.

So on, before "a fair Etesian gale," which follows clear and bright out of the south-south-west, glide forward the two great fleets, past Brighton Cliffs and Beachy Head, Hastings and Dungeness. Is it a battle or a triumph? For by sea Lord Howard, instead of fighting, is rewarding; and after Lord Thomas Howard, Lord Sheffield, Townsend, and Frobisher have received at his hands that knighthood, which was then more honourable than a peerage, old Admiral Hawkins kneels and rises up Sir John, and shaking his shoulders after the accolade, observes to the representative of majesty, that his "old woman will hardly know herself again, when folks call her My Lady."

And meanwhile the cliffs are lined with pikemen and musketeers, and by every countryman and groom who can bear arms, led by their squires and sheriffs, marching eastward as fast as their weapons let them, towards the Dover shore.

The Spaniards are dispirited and battered, but unbroken still; and as they slide to their anchorage in Calais Roads on the Saturday evening of that most memorable week, all prudent men know well that England's hour is come, and that the bells which will call all Christendom to church upon the morrow morn, will be either the death-knell or the triumphal peal of the Reformed faith throughout the world.

But where is Amyas Leigh all this while? Day after day he has been seeking the *Sta. Catharina* in the thickest of the press, and cannot come at her, cannot even hear of her: one moment he dreads that she has sunk by night, and balked him of his prey; the next, that she has repaired her damages, and will escape him after all. He is moody, discontented, restless, even (for the first time in his life) peevish with his men. He can talk of nothing but Don Guzman; he can find no better employment, at every spare moment, than taking his sword out of the sheath, and handling it, fondling it, talking to it even, bidding it not to fail him in the day of vengeance.

Amyas called for a boat and went on board Drake's ship to ask news of the *Sta. Catharina*, and listened scowling to the loud chants and tinkling bells, which came across the water from the Spanish fleet. At last, Drake was summoned by the Lord Admiral, and returned with a secret commission, which ought to bear fruit that night; and Amyas, who had gone with him, helped him till nightfall, and then returned to his own ship as Sir Amyas Leigh, Knight, to the joy and glory of every soul on board, except his moody self.

So there, the livelong summer Sabbath day, before the little high-walled town and the long range of yellow sandhills, lie those two mighty armaments, scowling at each other, hardly out of gun-shot. Messenger after messenger is hurrying towards Bruges to the Duke of Parma, for light craft which can follow these nimble English somewhat better than their own floating castles; and, above all, entreating him to put to sea at once with all his force. He returns for answer: first, that his victual is not ready; next, that his Dutch sailors, who have been kept at their post for many a week at the sword's point, have run away like water; and thirdly, that over and above all, he cannot come, so "strangely provided of great ordnance and musketeers" are those five-and-thirty Dutch ships, in which round-sterned and stubborn-hearted heretics watch, like terriers at a rat's hole, the entrance of Nieuwport and Dunkirk.

Lord Henry Seymour has brought Lord Howard a letter of command from Elizabeth's self; and Drake has been carrying it out so busily all that Sunday long, that by two o'clock on the Monday morning, eight fire-ships "besmeared with wildfire, brimstone, pitch, and resin, and all their ordnance charged with bullets and with stones," are stealing down the wind straight for the Spanish fleet, guided by two valiant men of Devon Young and Prowse. (Let their names live long in the land!) The ships are fired, the men of Devon steal back, and in a moment more, the heaven is red with glare from Dover Cliffs to Gravelines Tower.

And then breaks forth one of those disgraceful panics which so often follow overweening presumption; and shrieks, oaths, prayers, and reproaches make night hideous. Cutting all cables, hoisting any sails, the

Invincible Armada goes lumbering wildly out to sea, every ship foul of her neighbour.

The largest of the four galliasses loses her rudder, and drifts helpless to and fro, hindering and confusing. The duke having (so the Spaniards say) weighed his anchor deliberately instead of leaving it behind him, runs in again after a while, and fires a signal for return: but his truuant sheep are deaf to the shepherd's pipe, and swearing and praying by turns, he runs up Channel towards Gravelines, picking up stragglers on his way, who are struggling as they best can among the flats and shallows: but Drake and Fenner have arrived as soon as he. When Monday's sun rises on the quaint old castle and muddy dykes of Gravelines town, the thunder of the cannon recommences, and is not hushed till night. Drake can hang coolly enough in the rear to plunder when he thinks fit: but when the battle needs it, none can fight more fiercely, among the foremost; and there is need now, if ever. That Armada must never be allowed to re-form. If it does, its left wing may yet keep the English at bay, while its right drives off the blockading Hollanders from Dunkirk port, and sets Parma and his flotilla free to join them, and to sail in doubled strength across to the mouth of Thames.

So Drake has weighed anchor, and away up Channel with all his squadron, the moment that he saw the Spanish fleet come up; and with him Fenner burning to redeem the honour which, indeed, he had never lost; and ere Fenton, Beeston, Crosse, Ryman, and Lord Southwell can join them, the Devon ships have been worrying the Spaniards for two full hours into confusion worse confounded.

But what is that heavy firing behind them? Alas for the great galliasse! She lies, like a huge stranded whale, upon the sands where now stands Calais pier: and Amyas Preston, the future hero of La Guayra, is pounding her into submission, while a fleet of hoys and drumblers look on and help, as jackals might the lion.

Soon, on the south-west horizon, loom up larger and larger two mighty ships, and behind them sail on sail. As they near a shout greets the *Triumph* and the *Bear*; and on and in the Lord High Admiral glides stately into the thickest of the fight.

True, we have still but some three-and-twenty ships which can cope at all with some ninety of the Spaniards : but we have dash, and daring, and the inspiration of utter need. Now, or never, must the mighty struggle be ended. We worried them off Portland; we must rend them in pieces now; and in rushes ship after ship, to smash her broadsides through and through the wooden castles, "sometimes not a pike's-length asunder," and then out again to reload, and give place meanwhile to another. The smaller are fighting with all sails set; the few larger, who, once in, are careless about coming out again, fight with topsails loose, and their main and fore-yards close down on deck, to prevent being boarded. The duke, Oquenda, and Recalde, having with much ado got clear of the shallows, bear the brunt of the fight to seaward; but in vain. The day goes against them more and more, as it runs on. Seymour and Winter have battered the great *San Philip* into a wreck; her masts are gone by the board; Pimentelli in the *San Matthew* comes up to take the mastiffs off the fainting bull, and finds them fasten on him instead; but the Evangelist, though smaller, is stouter than the Deacon, and of all the shot poured into him, not twenty "lackt him thorough." His masts are tottering; but sink on strike he will not.

"Go ahead, and pound his tough hide, Leigh," roars Drake off the poop of his ship, while he hammers away at one of the great galliasses. "What right has he to keep us all waiting?"

Amyas slips in as best he can between Drake and Winter; as he passes he shouts to his ancient enemy—

"We are with you, sir; all friends to-day!" and slipping round Winter's bows, he pours his broadside into those of the *San Matthew*, and then glides on to reload; but not to return. For, not a pistol shot to leeward worried by three or four small craft, lies an immense galleon; and on her poop—can he believe his eyes for joy?—the maiden and the wheel which he has sought so long!

"There he is!" shouts Amyas, springing to the starboard side of the ship. The men, too, have already caught sight of that hated sign; a cheer of fury bursts from every throat.

‘Steady, men!’ says Amyas in a suppressed voice. ‘Not a shot! Reload, and be ready; I must speak with him first;’ and silent as the grave, amid the infernal din, the *Vengeance* glides up to the Spaniard’s quarter. ‘Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto!’ shouts Amyas from the mizzen rigging, loud and clear amid the roar.

He has not called in vain. Fearless and graceful as ever, the tall, mail-clad figure of his foe leaps up upon the poop-railing, twenty feet above Amyas’s head, and shouts through his vizor—

“At your service, sir! whosoever you may be.”

A dozen muskets and arrows are levelled at him; but Amyas frowns them down. “No man strikes him but I. Spare him, if you kill every other soul on board. Don Guzman! I am Captain Sir Amyas Leigh; I proclaim you a traitor and a ravisher, and challenge you once more to single combat, when and where you will.”

“You are welcome to come on board me, sir,” answers the Spaniard in a clear, quiet tone; “bringing with you this answer, that you lie in your throat;” and lingering a moment, out of bravado, to arrange his scarf, he steps slowly down again behind the bulwarks.

“Coward!” shouts Amyas at the top of his voice.

The Spaniard reappears instantly. “Why that name, Señor, of all others?” asks he in a cool, stern voice.

“Because we call men cowards in England, who leave their wives to be burnt alive by priests.”

The moment the words had passed Amyas’s lips, he felt that they were cruel and unjust. But it was too late to recall them. The Spaniard started, clutched his sword-hilt, and then hissed back through his closed vizor—

“For that word, sirrah, you hang at my yard-arm, if Saint Mary gives me grace.”

“See that your halter be a silken one, then,” laughed Amyas, “for I am just dubbed knight.” And he stepped down as a storm of bullets rang through the rigging round his head; the Spaniards are not as punctilious as he.

“Fire!” His ordnance crash through the stern-works of the Spaniard; and then he sails onward, while her balls go humming harmlessly through his rigging.

Half an hour has passed of wild noise and fury; three

times has the *Vengeance*, as a dolphin might, sailed clean round and round the *Sta. Catharina*, pouring in broadside after broadside, till the guns are leaping to the deck-beams with their own heat, and the Spaniard's sides are slit and spotted in a hundred places. And yet, so high has been his fire in return, and so strong the deck defences of the *Vengeance*, that a few spars broken, and two or three men wounded by musketry, are all her loss. But still the Spaniard endures, magnificent as ever; it is the battle of the thresher and the whale; the end is certain, but the work is long.

A puff of wind clears away the sulphureous veil for a moment; the sea is clear of ships towards the land; the Spanish fleet are moving again up Channel, Medina bringing up the rear; only some two miles to their right hand, the vast hull of the *San Philip* is drifting up the shore with the tide, and somewhat nearer the *San Matthew* is hard at work at her pumps. They can see the white stream of water pouring down her side.

In the meanwhile, long ere the sun had set, comes down the darkness of the thunderstorm, attracted, as to a volcano's mouth, to that vast mass of sulphur-smoke which cloaks the sea for many a mile; and heaven's artillery above makes answer to man's below. But still, through smoke and rain, Amyas clings to his prey. She too has seen the northward movement of the Spanish fleet, and sets her topsails; Amyas calls to the men to fire high, and cripple her rigging: but in vain: for three or four belated galleys, having forced their way at last over the shallows, come flashing and sputtering up to the combatants, and take his fire off the galleon. Amyas grinds his teeth, and would fain hustle into the thick of the press once more, in spite of the galley's beaks.

"Most heroical captain," says Cary, pulling a long face, "if we do, we are stove and sunk in five minutes: not to mention that Yeo says he has not twenty rounds of great cartridge left."

So, surely and silent, the *Vengeance* sheers off, but keeps as near as she can to the little squadron, all through the night of rain and thunder which follows. Next morning the sun rises on a clear sky, with a strong west north-west breeze, and all hearts are asking what the day will bring forth.

They are long past Dunkirk now; the German Ocean is opening before them. The Spaniards, sorely battered, and lessened in numbers, have during the night regained some sort of order. The English hang on their skirts a mile or two behind. They have no ammunition, and must wait for more. To Amyas's great disgust, the *Sta. Catharina* has rejoined her fellows during the night.

"Never mind," says Cary; "she can neither dive nor fly, and as long as she is above water, we—— What is the Admiral about?"

He is signalling Lord Henry Seymour and his squadron. Soon they tack, and come down the wind for the coast of Flanders. Parma must be blockaded still; and the Hollanders are likely to be too busy with their plunder to do it effectually. Suddenly there is a stir in the Spanish fleet. Medina and the rearmost ships turn upon the English. What can it mean? Will they offer battle once more? If so, it were best to get out of their way, for we have nothing wherewith to fight them. So the English lie close to the wind. They will let them pass, and return to their old tactic of following and harassing.

"Good-bye to Seymour," says Cary, "if he is caught between them and Parma's flotilla. They are going to Dunkirk."

"Impossible! They will not have water enough to reach his light craft. Here comes a big ship right upon us! Give him all you have left, lads; and if he will fight us, lay him alongside, and die boarding."

They gave him what they had, and hulled him with every shot; but his huge side stood silent as the grave. He had not wherewithal to return the compliment.

"As I live, he is cutting loose the foot of his mainsail! the villain means to run."

"There go the rest of them! Victoria!" shouted Cary, as one after another, every Spaniard set all the sail he could.

There was silence for a few minutes throughout the English fleet; and then cheer upon cheer of triumph rent the skies. It was over. The Spaniard had refused battle, and thinking only of safety, was pressing downward toward the Straits again. The Invincible Armada had cast away its name, and England was saved.

"But he will never get there, sir," said old Yeo, who had come upon deck to murmur his *Nunc Domine*, and gaze upon that sight beyond all human faith and hope: "Never, never will he weather the Flanders shore, against such a breeze as is coming up. Look to the eye of the wind, sir, and see how the Lord is fighting for His people!"

Yes, down it came, fresher and stiffer every minute out of the grey north-west, as it does so often after a thunder-storm; and the sea began to rise high and white, till the Spaniards were fain to take in all spare canvas, and lie-to as best they could; while the English fleet, lying-to also, awaited an event which was in God's hands and not in theirs.

"They will be all ashore on Zealand before the afternoon," murmured Amyas; "and I have lost my labour! Oh, for powder, powder, powder! to go in and finish it at once!"

"Oh, sir," said Yeo, "don't murmur against the Lord in the very day of His mercies. It is hard, to be sure; but His will be done."

"Could we not borrow powder from Drake there?"

"Look at the sea, sir!"

And, indeed, the sea was far too rough for any such attempt. The Spaniards neared and neared the fatal dunes, which fringed the shore for many a dreary mile; and Amyas had to wait weary hours, growling like a dog who has had the bone snatched out of his mouth, till the day wore on; when, behold, the wind began to fall as rapidly as it had risen. A savage joy rose in Amyas's heart.

"They are safe! safe for us! Who will go and beg us powder? A cartridge here and a cartridge there?—anything to set to work again!"

Cary volunteered, and returned in a couple of hours with some quantity: but he was on board again only just in time, for the south-wester had recovered the mastery of the skies, and Spaniards and English were moving away; but this time northward. Whither now? To Scotland? Amyas knew not, and cared not, provided he was in the company of Don Guzman de Soto.

The Armada was defeated, and England saved.

CHAPTER XXX

YES, it is over; and the great Armada is vanquished. As the medals struck on the occasion said, "It came, it saw, and it fled!" And whither? Away and northward, like a herd of frightened deer, past the Orkneys and Shetlands, catching up a few hapless fishermen as guides; past the coast of Norway, there, too, refused water and food by the brave descendants of the Vikings; and on northward ever towards the lonely Faroes, and the everlasting dawn which heralds round the Pole the midnight sun.

Their water is failing; the cattle must go overboard; and the wild northern sea echoes to the shrieks of drowning horses. They must homeward at least, somehow, each as best he can. Let them meet again at Cape Finisterre, if indeed they ever meet. Medina Sidonia, with some five- and twenty of the soundest and best victualled ships, will lead the way, and leave the rest to their fate. He is soon out of sight; and forty more, the only remnant of that mighty host, come wandering wearily behind, hoping to make the south-west coast of Ireland, and have help, or, at least, fresh water there, from their fellow-Romanists. Alas for them! for now comes up from the Atlantic, gale on gale; and few of that hapless remnant reached the shores of Spain.

And where are Amyas and the *Vengeance* all this while?

At the fifty-seventh degree of latitude, the English fleet, finding themselves growing short of provision, and having been long since out of powder and ball, turn southward toward home. A few pinnaces are still sent onward to watch their course: and the English fleet, caught in the same storms which scattered the Spaniards, "with great danger and industry reached Harwich port, and there provide themselves of victuals and ammunition," in case the Spaniards should return; but there is no need for that caution. The Armada is away on the other side of Scotland, and Amyas is following in its wake.

Westward Ho !

For when the Lord High Admiral determined to return, Amyas asked leave to follow the Spaniard; and asked, too, of Sir John Hawkins, who happened to be at hand, such ammunition and provision as could be afforded him, promising to repay the same like an honest man, out of his plunder if he lived, out of his estate if he died; after which, Amyas, calling his men together, reminded them once more of the story of the Rose of Torridge and Don Guzman de Soto, and then asked—

“Men of Bideford, will you follow me? There will be plunder for those who love plunder; revenge for those who love revenge; and for all of us (for we all love honour) the honour of having never left the chase as long as there was a Spanish flag in English seas.”

And every soul on board replied, that they would follow Sir Amyas Leigh around the world.

It was now the sixteenth day of the chase. They had seen, the evening before, St. David's Head, and then the Welsh coast round Milford Haven, looming out black and sharp before the blaze of the inland thunderstorm.

In vain they had strained their eyes through the darkness, to catch, by the fitful glare of the flashes, the tall masts of the Spaniard. Of one thing at least they were certain, that with the wind as it was, she could not have gone far to the westward; and to attempt to pass them again and go northward, was more than she dare do.

Amyas paced the sloppy deck fretfully and fiercely. He knew that the Spaniard could not escape; but he cursed every moment which lingered between him and that one great revenge which blackened all his soul. The men sat sulkily about the deck, and whistled for a wind; the sails flapped idly against the masts; and the ship rolled in the long troughs of the sea, till her yard-arms almost dipped right and left.

So the morning wore away, without a sign of living thing not even a passing gull; and the black melancholy of the heaven reflected itself in the black melancholy of Amyas. Was he to lose his prey after all? The thought made him shudder with rage and disappointment. It was intolerable. Anything but that.

“No, God!” he cried, “let me but once feel this in my accursed heart, and then—strike me dead, if I do not wilt!”

"The Lord have mercy on us," cried John Brimblecombe. "What have you said?"

"What is that to you, sir? There, they are piping to dinner. Go down. I shall not come."

And Jack went down, and talked in a half-terrified whisper of Amyas's ominous words. All thought that they portended some bad luck, except old Yeo.

"Here she is!" thundered Amyas from the deck; and in an instant all were scrambling up the hatchway as fast as the frantic rolling of the ship would let them.

Yes. There she was. The cloud had lifted suddenly, and to the south a ragged bore of blue sky let a long stream of sunshine down on her tall masts and stately hull, as she lay rolling some four or five miles to the eastward: but as for land, none was to be seen.

The weary day wore on. The strip of blue sky was curtained over again, and all was dismal as before, though it grew sultrier every moment; and now and then a distant mutter shook the air to westward. Nothing could be done to lessen the distance between the ships, for the *Vengeance* had had all her boats carried away but one, and that was much too small to tow her: and while the men went down again to finish dinner, Amyas sharpened his sword, looking up every now and then suddenly at the Spaniard, as if to satisfy himself that it was not a vision which had vanished.

About two Yeo came up to him.

"He is ours safely now, sir. The tide has been running to the eastward for this two hours, and there comes the breeze."

"And there the storm, too."

And with that strangely accelerating pace which some storms seem to possess, the thunder, which had been growling slow and seldom far away, now rang peal on peal along the cloudy floor above their heads.

"Here comes the breeze. Round with the yards, or we shall be taken aback."

The yards creaked round; the sea grew crisp around them; the hot air swept their cheeks, tightened every rope, filled every sail, bent her over. A cheer burst from the men as the helm went up, and they staggered away before the wind, right down upon the Spaniard, who lay still becalmed.

Westward Ho !

"There is more behind, Amyas," said Cary. "Shall we not shorten sail a little?"

"No. Hold on every stitch," said Amyas. "Give me the helm, man. Boatswain, pipe away to clear for fight."

It was done, and in ten minutes the men were all at quarters, while the thunder rolled louder and louder overhead, and the breeze freshened fast.

"The dog has it now. There he goes!" said Cary.

"Right before the wind. He has no liking to face us."

"He is running into the jaws of destruction," said Yeo. "An hour more will send him either right up the Channel, or smack on shore somewhere."

After two hours more, the four miles had diminished to one, while the lightning flashed nearer and nearer as the storm came up; and from the vast mouth of a black cloud-arch poured so fierce a breeze that Amyas yielded unwillingly to hints which were growing into open murmurs, and bade shorten sail.

On they rushed with scarcely lessened speed, the black arch following fast, curtained by one flat grey sheet of pouring rain, before which the water was boiling in a long white line; while every moment behind the watery veil, a keen blue spark leapt down into the sea, or darted zigzag through the rain.

"We shall have it now, and with a vengeance; this will try your tackle, master," said Cary.

The functionary answered with a shrug, and turned up the collar of his rough frock, as the first drops flew stinging round his ears. Another minute and the squall burst full upon them, in rain, which cut like hail—hail which lashed the sea into froth, and wind which whirled off the heads of the surges, and swept the waters into one white seething waste. And above them, and behind them, and before them, the lightning leapt and ran, dazzling and blinding, while the deep roar of the thunder was changed to sharp ear-piercing cracks.

On they swept, gaining fast on the Spaniard.

"Call the men up, and to quarters; the rain will E over in ten minutes."

Yeo ran forward to the gangway; and sprang back again, with a face white and wild—

"Land right ahead! Port your helm, sir! For the love of God, port your helm!"

Amyas, with the strength of a bull, jammed the helm down, while Yeo shouted to the men below.

She swung round. The masts bent like whips, crack went the foresail like a cannon. What matter? Within two hundred yards of them was the Spaniard; in front of her, and above her, a huge dark bank rose through the dense hail, and mingled with the clouds; and at its foot, a plainer every moment, pillars and spouts of leaping foam.

"What is it, Morte? Hartland?"

It might be anything for thirty miles.

"Lundy!" said Yeo. "The south end! I see the head of the Shutter in the breakers! Hard a-port yet, and get her close-hauled as you can, and the Lord may have mercy on us still! Look at the Spaniard!"

Yes, look at the Spaniard!

He, too, had seen his danger, and tried to broach-to. But his clumsy mass refused to obey the helm; he struggled a moment, half hid in foam; fell away again, and rushed upon his doom.

"Lost! lost! lost!" cried Amyas madly, and throwing up his hands, let go the tiller. Yeo caught it just in time.

"Sir! sir! What are you at? We shall clear the rock yet."

"Yes!" shouted Amyas in his frenzy; "but he will not!"

Another minute. The galleon gave a sudden jar, and stopped. Then one long heave and bound, as if to free herself. And then her bows lighted clean upon the Shutter.

An awful silence fell on every English soul. They heard not the roaring of wind and surge; they saw not the blinding flashes of the lightning; but they heard one long ear-piercing wail to every saint in heaven rise from five hundred human throats; they saw the mighty ship heel over from the wind, and sweep headlong down the cataract of the race, plunging her yards into the foam and showing her whole black side even to her keel, till she rolled clean over, and vanished for ever and ever.

"Shame!" cried Amyas, hurling his sword far into the sea, "to lose my right, my right! when it was in my very grasp! Unmerciful!"

Westward Ho!

A crack which rent the sky, and made the granite ring and quiver; a bright world of flame, and then a blank of utter darkness, against which stood out, glowing red-hot, every mast and sail, and rock, and Salvation Yeo as he stood just in front of Amyas, the tiller in his hand. All red-hot, transfigured into fire; and behind, the black, black night.

A whisper, a rustling close beside him, and Brimblecombe's voice said softly—

"Give him more wine, Will; his eyes are opening."

"Hey-day?" said Amyas faintly, "not past the Shutter yet! How long she hangs in the wind!"

"We are long past the Shutter, Sir Amyas," said Brimblecombe.

"Are you mad? Cannot I trust my own eyes?"

There was no answer for a while.

"We are past the Shutter, indeed," said Cary very gently, "and lying in the cove at Lundy."

"Oh, Sir Amyas Leigh, dear Sir Amyas Leigh," blubbered poor Jack, "put out your hand, and feel where you are, and pray the Lord to forgive you for your wilfulness!"

A great trembling fell upon Amyas Leigh; half-fearfully he put out his hand; he felt that he was in his hammock, with the deck beams close above his head. The vision which had been left upon his eye-balls vanished like a dream.

"What is this? I must be asleep! What has happened? Where am I?"

"In your cabin, Amyas," said Cary.

"What? And where is Yeo?"

"Yeo is gone where he longed to go, and as he longed to go. The same flash which struck you down, struck him dead."

"Dead? Lightning? Any more hurt? I must go and see. Why, what is this?" and Amyas passed his hand across his eyes. "It is all dark—dark, as I live! And he passed his hand over his eyes again.

There was another dead silence. Amyas broke it.

"O God!" shrieked the great proud sea-captain, "God, I am blind! blind! blind!" And writhing in great horror, he called to Cary to kill him and put him out of his misery, and then wailed for his mother to come and

lp him, as if he had been a boy once more, while Brimblecombe and Cary, and the sailors who crowded round the cabin door, wept as if they too had been boys once more. Soon his fit of frenzy passed off, and he sank back exhausted.

They lifted him into their remaining boat, rowed him ashore, carried him painfully up the hill to the old castle, and made a bed for him on the floor, in the very room in which Don Guzman and Rose Salterne had plighted their troth to each other, five wild years before.

Three miserable days were passed within that lonely tower. Amyas, utterly unnerved by the horror of his misfortune, and by the over-excitement of the last few weeks, was incessantly delirious.

On the fourth day his raving ceased : but he was still too weak to be moved. Toward noon, however, he called for food, ate a little and seemed revived.

"Will," he said after a while, "this room is as stifling as it is dark. I feel as if I should be a sound man once more if I could but get one snuff of the sea-breeze."

The surgeon shook his head at the notion of moving him : but Amyas was peremptory.

"I am captain still, Tom Surgeon, and will sail for the Indies, if I choose. Will Cary, Jack Brimblecombe, will you obey a blind general?"

"What you will in reason," said they both at once.

"Then lead me out, my masters, and over the down to the south end. To the point at the south end I must go; there is no other place will suit."

And he rose firmly to his feet, and held out his hands for theirs.

"Let him have his humour," whispered Cary. "It may be the working off of his madness." And they set forth, Amyas walking slowly, but firmly, between his two friends.

On they went to the point, where the cyclopean wall of granite cliff which forms the western side of Lundy ends sheer in a precipice of some three hundred feet, topped by a pile of snow-white rock, bespangled with golden lichens.

It was a glorious sight upon a glorious day. To the northward the glens rushed down toward the cliff, crowned with grey crags, and carpeted with purple heather

and green fern; and from their feet stretched away to the westward the sapphire rollers of the vast Atlantic, crowned with a thousand crests of flying foam.

All three were silent for a while; and Jack and Cary, gazing downward with delight upon the glory and the grandeur of the sight, forgot for a while that their companion saw it not. Yet when they started sadly, and looked into his face, did he not see it? So wide and eager were his eyes, so bright and calm his face, that they fancied for an instant that he was once more even as they.

A deep sigh undeceived them. "I know it is all here—the dear old sea, where I would live and die. And my eyes feel for it; feel for it—and cannot find it; never, never will they find it again for ever! God's will be done!

"Now set me where I can rest among the rocks without fear of falling—for life is sweet still, even without eyes, friends—and leave me to myself a while."

"You can sit here as in an arm-chair," said Cary, helping him down to one of those square natural seats so common in the granite tors.

"Good; now turn my face to the Shutter. Be sure and exact. So! Do I face it full?"

"Full," said Cary.

"Then I need no eyes wherewith to see what is before me," said he, with a sad smile. "I know every stone and every headland, and every wave, too, I may say, far beyond aught that eye can reach. Now go, and leave me alone with God and with the dead!"

They retired a little space and watched him. He never stirred for many minutes; then leaned his elbows on his knees, and his head upon his hands, and so was still again. He remained so long thus, that the pair became anxious and went towards him. He was asleep, and breathing quick and heavily.

"He will take a fever," said Brimblecombe, "if he sleep much longer with his head down in the sunshine."

"We must wake him gently, if we wake him at all. And Cary moved forward to him.

As he did so, Amyas lifted his head, and turning it right and left, felt round him with his sightless eyes.

"You have been asleep, Amyas."

"Have I? I have not slept back my eyes, then. Tak

p this great useless carcass of mine, and lead me home. I shall buy me a dog when I get to Burrough, I think, and make him tow me in a string, eh? So! Give me your hand. Now march!"

His guides heard with surprise this new cheerfulness. "Thank God, sir, that your heart is so light already," said good Jack; "it makes me feel quite upraised myself, like."

"I have reason to be cheerful, Sir John; I have left a heavy load behind me. I have been wilful, and proud, and a blasphemer, and swollen with cruelty and pride; and God has brought me low for it, and cut me off from my evil delight. No more Spaniard-hunting for me now, my masters. God will send no such fools as I upon His errands."

"You do not repent of fighting the Spaniards?"

"Not I; but of hating even the worst of them. Listen to me, Will and Jack. If that man wronged me, I wronged him likewise. I have been a fiend when I thought myself the grandest of men, yea, a very avenging angel out of heaven. But God has shown me my sin."

They looked in his face. It was clear and gentle, like the face of a new-born babe. Gradually his head dropped upon his breast again; he was either swooning or sleeping, and they had much ado to get him home. There he lay for eight-and-forty hours, in a quiet doze; then arose suddenly, called for food, ate heartily, and seemed, saving his eyesight, as whole and sound as ever. The surgeon bade them get him home to Northam as soon as possible, and he was willing enough to go. So the next day the *Vengeance* sailed, leaving behind a dozen men to seize and keep in the Queen's name any goods which should be washed up from the wreck.

CHAPTER XXXI

It was the first of October. The morning was bright and still; the skies were dappled modestly from east to west with soft grey autumn cloud, as if all heaven and earth were resting after those fearful summer months of battle and of storm. Silently, as if ashamed and sad, the *Vengeance* slid over the bar, and passed the sleeping sandhills and dropped her anchor off Appledore, with her flag floating half-mast high; for the corpse of Salvation Yeo was on board.

A boat pulled off from the ship, and away to the western end of the strand; and Cary and Brimblecombe helped out Amyas Leigh, and led him slowly up the hill toward his home.

He seemed to know perfectly when they had reached the gates, opened the lock with his own hands, and went boldly forward along the gravel path, while Cary and Brimblecombe followed him trembling; for they expected some violent burst of emotion, either from him or his mother, and the two good fellows' tender hearts were fluttering like a girl's. Up to the door he went, as if he had seen it; felt for the entrance, stood therein, and called quietly "Mother!"

In a moment his mother was on his bosom.

Neither spoke for a while. She sobbing inwardly, with tearless eyes, he standing firm and cheerful, with his great arms clasped around her.

"Mother!" he said at last, "I am come home, you see because I needs must come. Will you take me in, and look after this useless carcass? I shall not be so very troublesome, mother—shall I?" and he looked down and smiled upon her, and kissed her brow.

She answered not a word, but passed her arm gently round his waist, and led him in.

"Take care of your head, dear child, the doors are low. And they went in together.

"Will! Jack!" called Amyas, turning round: but the two good fellows had walked briskly off.

"I'm glad we are away," said Cary; "I should have

made a baby of myself in another minute, watching the angel of a woman. How her face worked and how she kept it in!"

"Ah, well!" said Jack, "there goes a brave servant of the Queen's cut off before his work was a quarter done. Heigho! I must home now, and see my old father and then——"

"And then home with me," said Cary. "You and I never part again! We have pulled in the same boat too long, Jack; and you must not go spending your prize-money in riotous living. I must see after you, old Jack ashore, or we shall have you treating half the town in taverns for a week to come."

"Oh, Mr. Cary!" said Jack, scandalized.

"Come home with me, and we'll poison the parson, and my father shall give you the rectory."

"Oh, Mr. Cary!" said Jack.

So the two went off to Clovelly together that very day. And Amyas was sitting all alone. His mother had gone out for a few minutes to speak to the seamen who had brought up Amyas's luggage, and set them down to eat and drink; and Amyas sat in the old bay-window, where he had sat when he was a tiny boy, and read *King Arthur*, and Fox's *Martyrs*, and *The Cruelties of the Spaniards*. He put out his hand and felt for them; there they lay side by side, just as they had lain twenty years before. The window was open; and a cool air brought in as of old the scents of the four-season roses, and rosemary, and autumn gillyflowers. And there was a dish of apples on the table: he knew it by their smell; the very same old apples which he used to gather when he was a boy. He put out his hand and took them, and felt them over, and played with them, just as if the twenty years had never been; and as he fingered them, the whole of his past life rose up before him, as in that strange dream which is said to flash across the imagination of a drowning man.

At last one of them slipped through his fingers, and fell on the floor. He stooped and felt for it: but he could not find it. Vexatious! He turned hastily to search in another direction, and struck his head sharply against the table.

Was it the pain, or the little disappointment? or was it the sense of his blindness brought home to him in that

commonplace way, and for that very reason all humiliating? or was it the sudden revulsion of strained nerves, produced by that slight shock? Or had he become indeed a child once more? I know not; so it was, that he stamped on the floor with pettishness, and then checking himself, burst into a violent flood of tears.

A quick rustle passed him; the apple was replaced in his hand, and Ayacanora's voice sobbed out—

"There! there it is! Do not weep! Oh, do not weep! I cannot bear it! I will get you all you want! Only let me fetch and carry for you, tend you, feed you, lead you, like your slave, your dog! Say that I may be your slave!" and falling on her knees at his feet, she seized both his hands, and covered them with kisses.

"Yes!" she cried, "I will be your slave! I must be! You cannot help it! You cannot escape from me now! You cannot go to sea! You cannot turn your back upon poor wretched me. I have you safe now! Safe!" and then she clutched his hands triumphantly. "Ah! and what a wretch I am, to rejoice in that! to taunt him with his blindness! Oh, forgive me! I am but a poor wild girl—a wild Indian savage, you know: but—but——" and she burst into tears.

A great spasm shook the body and soul of Amyas Leigh; he sat quite silent for a minute, and then said solemnly—

"And is this still possible? Then God have mercy upon me a sinner!"

Ayacanora looked up in his face inquiringly: but before she could speak again, he had bent down, and lifting her as the lion lifts the lamb, pressed her to his bosom, and covered her face with kisses.

The door opened. There was the rustle of a gown. Ayacanora sprang from him with a little cry, and stood half-trembling, half-defiant, as if to say—"He is mine now; no one dare part him from me!"

"Who is it?" asked Amyas.

"Your mother."

"You see that I am bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, mother," said he, with a smile.

He heard her approach. Then a kiss and a sob passed between the women; and he felt Ayacanora sink once more upon his bosom.

"Amyas, my son," said the silver voice of Mrs. Leigh, w, dreamy, like the far-off chimes of angels' bells from at the highest heaven; "fear not to take her to your heart again; for it is your mother who has laid her there." "It is true after all," said Amyas to himself. "What God has joined together, man cannot put asunder."

From that hour Ayacanora's power of song returned her; and day by day, year after year, her voice rose within that happy home, and soared, as on skylark's wings, into the highest heaven, bearing with it the peaceful thoughts of the blind giant back to the Paradises of the West, in the wake of the heroes who from that time forth sailed out to colonize another and a vaster England, the heaven-prospered cry of Westward Ho!



THE END

NOTES

PAGE

- 10 *ruttier*, directory.
 20 *veni et vapula*, come and be thrashed.
 21 *proh flagitium*, ah, scoundrel !
 22 *gratias tibi et Domino*, I thank thee and the Lord.
 23 *pugnax, bellicosus*, a pugnacious, quarrelsome fellow.
 plebeius, of the common people.
 ingenui vultus puer, a simple-faced boy.
 servitorship at Exeter, free studentship at Exeter College.
 28 Raleigh and Sidney were poets ; Spenser wrote the
 Calendar.
 30 *given you the dor*, had the laugh of you.
 33 *prie-dieu*, praying-stool.
 36 *selle*, saddle with a pun on *sel'* = self.
 38 *mater cælorum*, mother of heaven.
 62 *posse comitatus*, county constables.
 113 *kernes*, foot-soldiers.
 161 *miseriçordia*, mercy.
 191 *calentures*, fevers.
 194 *liane*, creeper.
 218 *caiman*, alligator.
 223 *omnia Romæ venalia*, everything is for sale at Rome.
 225 *allen verloren*, all lost.

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